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THE ROUÉ;

OR,

THE HAZARDS OF WOMEN.

A DOMESTIC ROMANCE, PUBLISHED IN LONDON TWENTY-FOUR YEARS AGO.

AND GENERALLY ATTRIBUTED TO AND SAID BY ALL TO BE WRITTEN

BY SIR EDWARD LYTTON BULWER.

AUTHOR OF "ZANONI," "NIGHT AND MORNING" "RICHELIEU," "LUCRETIA," "LAST OF THE BARONS," "EUGENE ARAM," "DEVEREUX," "LAST DAYS OF POMPEII," "ALICE," "ERNEST MALTRAVERS," "THE DISOWNED," "RIENZI," "PAUL CLIFFORD," "PELHAM," "HAROLD," "MARY OF BURGUNDY," "PHILIP AUGUSTUS," ETC., ETC., ETC.

COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED EDITION.

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THE BOOK:

OR

THE HANDS OF MOTEN

COLLEGE AND UNABRIDGED EDITION

BY SIR EDWARD FELLON BOPHER

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THE ROUÉ;

OR,

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A DOMESTIC ROMANCE,

FIRST PUBLISHED IN LONDON TWENTY-FOUR YEARS AGO, AND GENERALLY ATTRIBUTED TO

EDWARD LYTTON BULWER.

Were you, ye fair, but cautious whom ye trust,
So many of your sex would not in vain,
Of broken vows and faithless men complain.—ROWE.

CHAPTER I.

"FOR shame! for shame! Agnes, to come bursting into the room so rudely, and with your hair all hanging about so negligently:—is that like a lady?" exclaimed Lady Pomeroy, as her niece, a lively dark-eyed girl of about ten years of age, with a profusion of black curls waving in natural ringlets over her dark but clear forehead, came jumping and laughing into the dining parlor, to partake of the dessert, and of a parental kiss after dinner.

"Why do you not imitate your sister Amelia?—you see she does not come in such a hurry," pursued the same lady, as her eye turned towards the door with an approving glance at a fine fair-haired girl of eleven, who walked quietly and demurely into the room, and dropping a D'Egville curtsey at her entrance, made the round of the table; turning first one cheek, and then the other, to her parents and her aunt, without the possibility of discomposing either the economy of her own ringlets, or, like her sister, disturbing any body by her boisterous caresses.

"Your aunt speaks truly, Agnes," said her father; "you are growing too old to give way to this childishness, and you will indeed do well to begin to imitate the manners of Amelia."

The buoyant spirit of the youthful Agnes was, for a moment, checked by the reproof of her aunt, and by the severe glance of her father; but it soon revived, when she looked timidly into the face of her mother, who gazed tenderly and half pityingly on her, as she pressed her warmly to her bosom, when she came to her end of the table, a place she invariably sought the last; because there she was sure to gain a small portion of her mother's chair, and fruit; and with her she could chat and laugh, and give vent to all the childish and volatile spirits with which nature had blessed her.

"You should consider, my dear," said the mother, in an apologetic tone, "that Agnes has not had the advantage that Amelia possesses, in living so much with her aunt, and consequently, her spirits are not so much under control; neither has she enjoyed the tuition of D'Egville, to regulate her movements, nor of Crivelli to modulate her voice, nor a number of other privileges which the kindness of Lady Pomeroy has procured for her sister."

These words were accompanied with a glance which almost bespoke an admiration and a love of the little being who was the subject of her apology, greater than that which she felt for her whose superiority her words acknowledged.

But there was an appearance of melancholy, almost allied to pity, in this glance, which would have given an attentive observer the idea that she was looking into futurity, and dreading the effects of that acute sensibility which formed the principal characteristic of the young Agnes. Perhaps, at this moment, her memory glanced back to the time when her own heart leaped and bounded

with all the young energies of incipient feeling;—when the tear of pity, or the smile of gladness, was always ready to spring, at the slightest call, to her own lips and eyes. Perhaps, too, her imagination traced, with that power which it has of collecting and remembering the events and condensing results of whole years into the space of a moment, the long series of coldness by which all these young feelings had been checked and deadened, from the period of her sacrificing her first love at the shrine of filial duty and affection, to that in which she was now sitting, herself the mother of a being possessed of all those feelings, by the encouragement and the subsequent blight of which she had been condemned to a life of perpetual probation; and she almost wished that the heart of her darling Agnes was as cold as the world in which it was created to exist.

"It .s time, Mrs. Fleming," said her husband, in his formal and imperturbable manner, "that Agnes should enjoy the advantages you speak of. Nature may do well enough for the *canaille*, but I would have my daughter well taught, and well bred; and we cannot be too much obliged to my sister Lady Pomeroy, for the infinite pains she has taken with Amelia. Lady Pomeroy, will you send D'Egville to Mrs. Fleming to-morrow?"

Lady Pomeroy, who was quite as much an advocate for artificial education as her brother, gladly undertook the task. Mrs. Fleming, as usual, did not object, though she thought the natural movements of her darling Agnes far more graceful than any that could be given by art; while Agnes herself only saw in the proposition the delight of having a dancing-master, without anticipating the restraint her hitherto free limbs were condemned to undergo.

The indulgence, however, of any appearance of extravagant pleasure, was repressed by the frowns of her father, and by her aunt's directing her to imitate the quiet and lady-like behavior of her sister, who divided her fruit, and sipped her wine, as though she had no pleasure in partaking of them; and dipped her taper fingers into the crystal finger-glass with all the airs and graces of a little woman of fashion.

It had been fixed that they should this evening visit the theatre; and notwithstanding all her mother's coaxing and hushing, Agnes could not restrain her impatience at the delay of the carriage; she started at every sound, with an exclamation of "There it is!" and on each disappointment, rather vehemently expressed her fear of being too late.

All this was frowned at by her father, and nodded down by her aunt; while Amelia felt, or at least betrayed, no impatience or any anticipation of pleasure.

At length the carriage was announced. Agnes sprang from her mother's knee; her shawl was thrown hastily round her shoulders, without any regard to appearance or form; and she was in the hall and ready to depart, while her sister's maid was still folding a cashmere gracefully on the neck of Amelia, under the superintendence of Lady Pomeroy.

In spite of the delays occasioned by the ceremony of dressing out her sister, and of her father's methodical movements, which to the imagination of poor Agnes, seemed to proceed in doubly slow time this evening, they arrived at the theatre just as the curtain was rising.

Agnes could hardly repress her delight as she first caught a glimpse of the stage from the private box; for Mr. Fleming's ideas of propriety would not permit the close contact with strangers, which is occasioned by the occupation of a public one though Agnes could not help fancying that she should see much better in front of the theatre, than from one of the sides, where she was perpetually stretching her neck out of the box to the great discomfiture of her father, and to the horror of her well-bred aunt.

To her the scene was a new one, and every part of it afforded her pleasure; the people—the chandeliers—the house—the scenery—by turns extorted exclamations of childish delight; and she was perpetually directing her mother's attention, who alone heeded her, to one or other of the objects which excited her admiration.

In the mean time, Amelia sat in front of the box, with the folds of her cashmere undisturbed; the pride of her father and aunt, and certainly very beautiful.

As the play proceeded, the raptures of Agnes subsided: she became silent and attentive—wrapt up in the scene she was witnessing, her whole soul seemed absorbed in the horrors of the tragedy before them; when, to the consternation of Lady Pomeroy, at a moment when the whole house was wrapt in silent admiration of the powers of Mrs. Siddons, poor Agnes burst into a convulsive fit of tears, which were beyond her power to restrain or control, and her tender mother was obliged to hush her to tranquillity in a retired part of the box, by repeated representations that the scene was but fictitious.

It was some time, however, before she could imagine that all which she had seen was not real; nor did she quite overcome her feelings of terror and regret at the catastrophe of Isabella, until the humors of the harlequinade which followed, again absorbed her attention.

Here again her laughter at the tricks of the clown and pantaloon; her surprise at the agility of Harlequin and Columbine; and her childish exclamations of wonder at metamorphoses, which seemed to realize all that she had read in the Fairy Tales that constituted part of her infantine library, once more offended the punctilious *bienseance* of Lady Pomeroy.

During the whole exhibition, Amelia sat apparently an attentive spectator; but her cold and beautiful blue eye denoted no sympathy with the scene; her countenance betrayed no wonder at the tricks of the pantomime; nor could all the contortions of the clown produce more than a quiet smile upon her well-formed lips. And yet Amelia had not witnessed the tragedy without feeling; nor did she now contemplate the wonders of the pantomime without pleasure; but she had been schooled into a repression of all its appearances. She had been taught that the expressions of wonder or any show of sensibility was unpolite and unlady-like. And the outward ease which she was thus compelled to wear, was gradually indurating the heart beneath it. It was already acting as a frost upon the stream of her youthful

disposition, and nipping the generosity of her nature in the bud.

Not all the influence of her mother, nor the formal reproofs of her father and aunt could repress the prattle of Agnes as the carriage whirled them home. Question followed question, and wonder succeeded wonder, as she recapitulated all she had seen: and Amelia was buried in sleep long before Agnes had finished her relation of all the wonders she had witnessed to her maid.

Mrs. Fleming had contemplated the different characters of her children, as they were exhibited that evening, with equal regret. She mourned over the schooled mannerism of the one, as much as she dreaded the acute sensibilities of the other. She would have warmed, had she possessed the power, the heart and feelings of Amelia with a little of the Promethean fire which burnt too strongly in the spirit of Agnus—a spirit, alas! too like her own, and which, as she recalled all the early scenes of her own existence, made her tremble for the happiness of her daughter. As these scenes and circumstances recurred to her imagination and remembrance, she mentally exclaimed—"Ought I not rather to school her into the insensibility of her sister, than encourage feelings which may blossom only to be blighted? Is it not better for her to be insensible to the more exquisite pleasures of our nature, than run the hazard of their being turned to bitterness, as mine have been?

Yet with all the experience of her own blighted hopes, with all the remembrance of the miseries entailed on her by her own acute sense of feeling, she could not resolve to wish the heart of Agnes to be cold or inanimate.

But the sensibility of her nature was now daily developing to the anxious observation of an affectionate and trembling mother; who, for the sake of her child, began to dread the death, which she had long anticipated from her increasing feebleness, but which had no terrors for her in its approach.

She now, however, saw the necessity of a kind directing hand; and too plainly perceived that the severity of ceremony which characterized Mr. Fleming, was not adapted to the education and guidance of such a heart and mind as those of Agnes were, in their germs, and promised to be in their maturity.

She determined, therefore, to struggle with the incipient consumption, which had already tinted her cheek with that bright and beautiful spot, which has too often deceived both its victims and their friends. Alas! the very struggle of life under such a disease only tends to its speedier exhaustion. But for her young and innocent child she could resolve to live, although life had long lost all its charms for her; to subdue the excess of feeling, which had already begun to display itself, without banishing it entirely; to regulate her sensibilties, without annihilating them; to place a sound judgment, and a pure sense of religion, as sentinels over an exuberant fancy, and a wild imagination, was the plan of education which occupied the mind of this tender mother, as she reclined upon her sleepless pillow; and for which of us has not the pillow of a parent been sleepless through many a long night?—for which of us has it not been bathed with tears of agonizing anxiety as to the future welfare of a beloved child?

As her love mingled with the fears of Agnes, a mother's voice breathed a fervent prayer to the great Director of all hearts for the happiness of her child.

CHAPTER II.

The early history of Mrs. Fleming, with that of many young women whose fashion is superior to their fortune, and whose parents rather consider the establishment than the happiness of their child. Born with all the genuine feelings of her sex, with a heart capable of loving warmly, and with ideas that marriage should be the result only of affection, she yielded up her young heart to its impulses in favor of a person a few years older than herself, whose talents for conversation and powers of entertainment had made him a frequent and a welcome guest at her father's table.

To procure establishments for a numerous family, was the great and only ambition of her mother, Lady Mary Dornton.

It was this lady's policy, therefore, to render her dinner-table and drawing-room as attractive as gayety, talent, and entertainment could make them; and she felt proud in the contemplation of her success, as three married daughters sometimes graced the paternal board, while the scions of many of her contemporary rival matrons yet moved on in single blessedness.

She had still, however, a daughter to dispose of; and the Honorable Mr. Dornton's declining health made her dread a circumstance which, by leaving her only in possession of a widow s jointure, would prevent the continuance of her system, and deprive them of the advantages and facilities which crowded drawing rooms, and quadrilles. and duetts, afford to young ladies and manœuvring mammas.

Lady Mary had married a younger brother, and was not like some of her contemporaries, whose fortunes enabled them to render their houses and tables attractive by the sumptuousness of their feasts, and the splendor of their entertainments. She, therefore, had recourse to all the talent of the day, as an attraction to counterbalance the advantage which superior fortunes gave so many of her competitors in the field of matrimonial speculation.

But younger brothers were not Lady Mary's objects now, though she had not disdained one in her youth. They were not likely to afford establishments of sufficient consequence to provide her a periodical residence when the dreaded event we have alluded to should occur; and it was her plan that her daughter's houses should be such as would enable them to return in kind, in her old age and widowhood, that which she had done for them in their youth; in short, in all their establishments, she had an eye to her own future comforts.

Unfortunately, however, her scheme, though it eventually succeeded, kept the hearts of her daughters in a perpetual state of rebellion against their interests. They could not associate with talent

without feeling its influence; they could not hear soft and sweet music from the voice of one man, resplendant repartee from the lips of another, and feel a deep interest in the voyages, adventures, and "hair breadth 'scapes" of a third, and turn round and bestow their admiration and affection upon one who was, perhaps, looking only with envy upon those qualifications, without possessing any of them, and whose only claim to admiration was a title or an estate, unencumbered by any thing but his own dullness and stupidity.

Yet this was precisely what Lady Mary wished and expected her daughters to do; and consequently there was not one of them married to the man whom her own heart would have preferred, had it been left free and unbiassed in its choice.

It has often struck us that the heads of a family are not justified in the admission of any person into the intimate society of their children, to whom, should an attachment occur, there would be any decided objection. They should recollect that young hearts do not discriminate like old heads, and should be careful how they introduce talent, cheerfulness, and pleasantry, united with youth, and perhaps personal attraction, while their possessors are persons to whom they would object as husbands for their daughters.

Among those who were frequent and welcome guests at the table and in the drawing room of Lady Mary Dornton, was Augustus Clifton. He had just quitted college, and had commenced his literary career by a poem, which had given notoriety to his name, and which of course became a visiting ticket to parties where talent was the passport for admittance.

But Clifton was not a hackneyed poet. His production was that of impulse rather than education. He had portrayed the passions, not as he had read them, but as he felt them growing up in his own heart. He was a poet by nature, and all nature appeared to his young and unsullied imagination but as a beautiful poem; he considered all his undefined longings, all his incipient passions, only as so many legitimate passports to enjoyment. He had, indeed, the mind of a true poet; he looked at every thing abstractedly; he loved nature, he loved the world, and called it a beautiful world, because all things seemed to conspire to his wishes. He loved fame too, and wished to live in futurity. He could not bear that with his life his name should pass away; he wished that it might be enrolled among the master spirits of poetry in the abbey; he wished posterity to read it recorded with those from whose works he quoted so frequently and so aptly. He could not bear that

> He should be left, forgotten in the dust,
> When fate, relenting, lets the flower revive.

One vigorous effort of a young mind had gained him a celebrity which he was inexperienced enough to suppose would stand him in the stead of rank and fortune; he imagined the caresses and the invitations he received on all hands to be the permanent result of respect for his talents, instead of the evanescent feeling which would last only so long as he could afford entertainment. He believed the professions of assistance which he received to be sincere, and imagined that he saw a hand ready to help him up every step of the ladder of fame, and that fortune waited to welcome him at the top of it.

He had yet to learn that selfish vanity was the groundwork of all the kindness he received, and that the moment his presence ceased to gratify this passion in his admirers, they would cease to remember that he existed.

He little thought that his patrons of the moment would treat him as they did their champagne, enjoy its sparkling qualities, and dash aside the bottle which contained them the moment they ceased to exhilarate. Unfortunately for poor Mrs. Fleming, at the moment of Clifton's first introduction, her mother's mind was so intensely occupied with her manœuvres to make her third daughter the lady of a young baronet who had succeeded to an estate of seven thousand a year, that she was permitted, unmolested, to form her own little coteries in the drawing room, to secure the arm and the companionship of the one she liked best to the dinner table, and was allowed sufficient leisure to see and appreciate the talent which was considered by her mother only as an appendage to her party.

There was an artless buoyancy in the conversation of Augustus that rendered it quite unlike that of the hackneyed diner-out and that of the professed wits, who appeared made up for the occasion; and Agnes thought she perceived under all his brilliancy a goodness of heart and generosity of nature which she had herself sense and heart enough to appreciate far beyond the qualities which merely afforded entertainment. There was, likewise, that congeniality of disposition and sentiment so often existing between young, lively, and virtuous minds at their first entrance into the world, which drew them together. She found in his conversation all her own feelings expressed in much better and stronger language than that in which she could dress them up. Her heart silently acquiesced in the propriety of all he said, until imperceptibly he became the lawgiver to her feelings—the glass in which she moulded every action of her life! and she found herself perpetually thinking what he would say of this, and what he would think of that.

On his part, he was charmed with her naïveté, and his heart was flattered by her evident, though silent admiration. In time, he strove only to shine in her eyes; and at any sally of his wit, he turned to her smile as the principal meed of approbation. In short, what with music and poetry, and congeniality of sentiment, they went on and on, till they found themselves passionately in love with each other; and unfortunately not with that evanescent passion, the result of a few quadrilles and fine speeches, but with a love arising from a knowledge of the qualities of each other's hearts.

Young and ingenuous, they were not long in coming to an explanation, or at least to an understanding of each other's sentiments; for feelings like theirs required no set forms of speech to make them known.—Their eyes, the sound of each other's voices, their parting and meeting tremors, the searching looks of the one and the retiring glances of the other, soon disclosed more than whole hours of formal declaration could have done.

At length, however, the moment of declaration came; the tongue gave utterance to those feelings which the eyes had already expressed; mutual

vows, such vows as pass woman's lips but once, and springing warm from the heart, were given and received, and they felt rich in all the feelings of a first and young love; and who is there that under this influence does not overlook every obstacle to its gratification? What difficulties does it not hide from the inexperienced or blinded eyes of the lovers! what path does it not smooth! what prospects does it not brighten!

It was thus with Augustus and Agnes. He felt that within him which might procure fortune, though he was not possessed of it; and she fondly thought that her parents would overlook this deficiency, as she was the only person who would have to suffer the privations arising from its absence.

Filled with these ideas, they gave themselves up to the indulgence of their mutual love, nor woke from their pleasing dream until the third sister was married; and Lady Mary Dornton informed Agnes that proposals had been made in due form for her hand by Mr. Fleming, the only son of the rich Russian merchant whose wealth enabled him to outvie in splendor the proudest and the oldest aristocracy of the country.

Poor Agnes! it was some time before she could even bring to memory the person of this man, who now declared himself a candidate for her hand. He had sat unnoticed amidst the brilliant sallies of wit which graced her mother's table; and it was a long time before Lady Mary could bring to her recollection a very formal gentleman, who had twice asked her to dance a quadrille, and had three or four times taken wine with her at dinner.

When at length she did recollect a precise young gentleman, dressed to the very nicety of propriety, full of set speeches upon points of etiquette and appearance in the world, and was told by her mother, that she must prepare to receive this gentleman as her husband, in a tone that seemed so peremptory, as to take no denial and admit of no argument,—poor Agnes was thunder-struck. Her first impulse was to tell the true state of her feelings—but the words seemed glued to her lips; all she could murmur in her mother's ear was, "No—no—no,"—and she burst into tears. Lady Mary soothed her, praised her own and her father's anxiety for the happiness and welfare of their children, and spoke so much of parental tenderness, that Agnes began to think her heart rebellious and ungrateful to have a wish contrary to those of such kind parents.

CHAPTER III.

We will pass over the explanation, and terror, and grief of the young lovers; the sudden determination to fly from parents, friends, and the world, and give up all for love, and the struggle with which Agnes brought herself again into the line of her duty. Their hearts, their feelings were in an uproar. At one time they determined to throw themselves at the feet of her parents, tell the devotedness of their love, and appeal to their mercy. At this period Mr. Dornton died.

The real grief of Agnes for the death of her father, and the ceremonials of widowhood on the part of her mother, for a time suspended all other considerations; Augustus's sympathy, however, in her loss only fixed the heart of poor Agnes more firmly upon him. She had one less to love in the world, and the love which was thus deprived of its object, seemed to render that which she felt for Augustus the stronger,

It was during this period of mourning that the absence of company, and the comparative solitude in which they lived, gave Lady Mary the opportunity of discovering the true state of her daughter's affections, and her repugnance to the marriage with Mr. Fleming was accounted for. This marriage was, however, more than ever desirable since the death of her husband, and the before-mentioned jointure had become her only reliance, and she determined to leave no scheme untried to accomplish it. The expensive life she had led, had totally precluded the possibillity of any provision being made for Agnes; she therefore worked upon her generous feelings, by the argument of a portionless wife being a burthen upon the talents of Augustus, and being likely to keep him in a state of dependence and poverty all his life. Poor Agnes felt that these would be nothing were they shared with him she loved; but her generous soul recoiled from the idea of being a clog upon the talents she admired; and she looked forward with something like dismay to the possibility of self-reproach, should any period arrive in which she might be an impediment to the fortune or exertions of Augustus.

On the other hand, Lady Mary sent for Clifton, and represented to him the injustice of his preventing the establishment of Agnes, while there was no probability of his having one to offer her—professed that had Agnes been possessed of a fortune sufficient for them both, that their union would have made her happy—nay, went so far as to say, that had her jointure not been so very inconsiderable, or had it been sufficient for them all to have lived upon it, she would have sanctioned their union, and given them a home, until his talents and exertions could win their way to the success they deserved; but her much admired Mr. Clifton must feel, she said, that it was impossible for her to consign her daughter to poverty; and she was sure that his own affection for Agnes would prevent his being a party to such a sacrifice. She represented the luxury in which she had been accustomed to live; and contrasted it with the probable state to which her marriage with Augustus would reduce her, and portrayed her sinking silently and uncomplainingly under the contemptuous pity of her former companions.

Clifton felt the full force of all she said, and quitted her broken hearted.

Agnes was thus separated from her lover, and left to all the schemes and manœuvres of Lady Mary. But it is disgusting to dwell on all the cold blooded, selfish policy, which actuates a mother, determined on the sacrifice of a daughter. It is revolting to human nature, to think upon the many hearts immolated upon the shrine which the selfishness of relations creates; and upon the thousand schemes which are successful only in too many instances to subject their victims to temptations, which lead them into errors, to which the opposition of parental authority upon such a point, would have been venial.

Suffice it to say, that the distress of her mother, and her filial affection, at length so wrought upon her heart, that she first consented to listen to her mother's proposals on the part of Mr. Fleming, and at length to listen to Mr. Fleming himself.

She persuaded herself, that Clifton being lost, there was no other hope of happiness for her; and with her usual romantic tendency, determined to sacrifice herself for her mother; quieting her conscience on the subject of her love for another, by the intention of making an exemplary wife. Perhaps, too, unknown to herself, she was influenced by the perfect silence of Augustus,—a silence that was tacitly insinuated to have arisen from the certainty that he had obtained of her having no fortune.

This idea she rejected, however, indignantly; but still the silence, the apparent and total abandonment she had experienced, had its effect upon feminine pride—(and what woman is without it?)—and helped her mother's schemes.

Poor Augustus, always in extremes, influenced by the arguments of Lady Mary, generously and at once sacrificed his feelings to what he considered the interests of Agnes; and having once come to this determination, he did it completely. But could Agnes have beheld him in his solitary chambers, gazing on every remembrance he possessed of their short and unhappy loves; could she have known of his sleepless nights, and have beheld his pale wan cheek, growing hourly paler and thinner, not even the love she bore her mother, not even her high sense of duty would have made her relinquish him.

Well, Mr. Fleming was at length admitted; brought and formally introduced, in his character as an approved lover, by Lady Mary, and left alone with Agnes to tell his own tale.

As she coldly listened to his formal address, how did her poor heart sicken at the contrast between the set terms, the studied sentences, the etiquette of his declaration, and the fire and feeling of Clifton, when an accidental circumstance drew from his bursting heart the full and free confession of a first and genuine love.

But this thought was dangerous, and she did not indulge it. She reflected on her mother's reduced means—she anticipated something like the return of pleasure in adding to her comforts, and she accepted Mr. Fleming.

From this moment, all was bustle and importance on the part of Lady Mary. Paragraphs in the public papers hinted at the approaching union—friends poured in with congratulations—her sisters, relieved from the dread of her being a poor unportioned dependent; all contributed to give eclat to, and to hasten the accomplishment of their mother's wishes. Agnes had scarcely any time left for thought; and she herself felt its indulgence to be too dangerous to encourage it.

Augustus read in the solitude of his chambers paragraph after paragraph, with initials the same as those which were inscribed on a pale gold ring, the only gift of his adored Agnes. As the nuptials approached, the papers spoke out more plainly; and at length, the approaching union of "the rich Mr. Henry Fleming with the youngest daughter of the fashionable Lady Mary Dornton," was openly announced. His eye was fascinated to the paragraph.

He had vainly thought that his mind was made up to the event which he felt must one day or other he accomplished; he imagined he had wrought his heart into that state of insensibility, that would enable him to contemplate with stoicism the catastrophe of his first love.

Poor youth!—at three-and-twenty he attempted a task which nothing but constant collision with a cold-blooded world can enable any warm heart to accomplish.

Agnes, on her part, was not less unhappy; but feminine delicacy prevented its appearance any where but in the silence of her chamber; there she still indulged those recollections which a few weeks would now render criminal. She still looked on every token of her first lover's affection, as they lay humbly by the side of Mr. Fleming's more splendid, but far less cherished, gifts, on her toilet table.

She had been gradually working up her mind to the necessity of sacrificing these tokens; but she still preserved them to the last possible moment, that she could retain and gaze upon them without a crime. She would not run the risk of communication, or of hurting the feelings of Augustus by returning them; nor would she hazzard their ever being worn by any but herself. They were consecrated to the first and only love she had ever experienced; and she consigned them to destruction along with the passion of which they had been the tokens. At length, on the evening preceding the morning fixed for her marriage, she worked up her mind to the dreaded task—she desired her maid to replenish the fire in her dressing-room, and retire for the night.

For some time she moved restlessly about her room, without being able to assume sufficient resolution. She determined to curb this restlessness, and sat down doggedly to the fire. Her eye fixed upon the rising flames, with scarcely less feeling than that which the victim of some horrid sacrifice might be supposed to contemplate the fire upon the altar, on which she was to be immolated. From the fire, her eye wandered round the apartment; resting first on the humble ornaments, and a pile of sonnets, sent to her by Augustus; then on the more splendid decorations which glittered proudly in the jewel-case which had been forwarded that evening from Rundell's.

She seized upon the few ornaments she had received from Clifton, kissed them again and again, gazed upon them, and one by one committed them to the fire, which was now intense enough to accomplish their destruction easily. She had more difficulty in parting from the letters and poems. Each was an illustration of the heart of the writer, and of the passion by which he was inspired. Every line brought the moment of its composition fresh to her recollection, with all the vivid feelings which accompanied it.

The dearer, however, she found them to be, the greater she felt the necessity for their destruction. Wet with her tears, she threw them one after another into the flames; and they soon dropped in sparkling and blackened fragments on the hearth, fit illustrations of her darkened prospects and destroyed hopes.

As she watched the destruction of the first sonnet he had ever addressed to her, and which she had reserved till the last, a burst of grief issued in sighs and groans from her overwhelmed heart. She started—was it imagination, or did she really hear her sigh re-echoed in the direction of the window? She listened with breathless attention. A rustling, stronger than that of the night breeze, seemed for a moment to agitate the trees which overhung her casement—a moan, louder than that of the whistling of the wind, seemed to meet her ear, and all was again silent.

Could it be possible? thought she—could it be? No, no! the height of her window from the ground, the difficulty of access to the gardens behind the houses she inhabited—all forbade the supposition. She chid herself for having one moment indulged in it, and wept away the night in fruitless regrets for the past and gloomy anticipations for the future, and in vain attempts to reduce her feelings to that state of tranquillity which the ceremony of the coming day required.

CHAPTER IV.

The day appointed for the nuptials came. It was a clear bright morning in early Spring; the stunted plants in the square which Agnes inhabited, had already put forth their half grown buds in spite of the smoky atmosphere of the metropolis; the sun shone in at the windows of her dressing room with a cheerfulness that seemed a mockery to the feelings within. The busy, early world of London was on the wing, and Agnes's maid was decorating her for her wedding.

Carriage after carriage arrived, and set down the invited guests at Lady Mary Dornton's; all was hurry and bustle and congratulation; and the formal Mr. Fleming was gratified by the numerous coronets appearing to various branches of his bride's family, which were assembled to grace the approaching ceremony.

His ambition had been to ally himself with nobility; and the crowd of titled cousins of his intended wife, from the first to the sixteenth degree, for Lady Mary had assembled them all, convinced him that his wealth had purchased noble connections by wholesale; and his vanity was delighted to think that a little hour would see him the cousin, by marriage, to at least one sixth of the coroneted heads of the kingdom.

His was a mind and heart untouched by the sacred fire of feeling; the ethereal spark of existence seemed omitted in his composition; all was dull, dense matter; the whole extent of his perceptions reached not beyond the ceremony and etiquette of that society to which he had gained admission only by his enormous wealth. The greatest misery to himself, and the greatest crime in others, was to offend against that *bienséance*, in the study of which he had forgotten whether he had ever possessed a heart.

The language of passion was as far removed from his powers as its feelings; he had no conception of marriage beyond its ceremony and the connection he was to acquire by it. The kind of woman by whom these wishes were to be accomplished was nearly indifferent to him, and it was by mere accident that he found the opportunity of accomplishing them, through the medium of one so lovely and so amiable as Agnes.

Such was the bridegroom destined to lead to the altar a young and ardent woman, who had pictured her future husband as a hero, and a man of sentiment and talent; such the man to become entitled to all those warm and generous feelings which had been yielded with the ardor of a first love, to a man who promised to realize all her youthful anticipations; such was the frigid successor to the fiery and impetuous Augustus Clifton.

Agnes entered the drawing-room, surrounded by her mother and married sisters, and supported by her bridesmaids, whose laughing countenances, sparkling eyes, and rosy dimples, formed strong contrasts to the pallid and sunken cheek and dim eye of the bride, which appeared tearless from exhaustion, rather than from the absence of sorrow.

The signal was now given for departure, and all the horses' heads were turned in the direction of St. James's; the bridegroom's carriage being the first, that he might be in readiness to receive his bride at the altar.

At the first sight of the church the shuddering of Agnes returned.—Supported by her mother, she tottered up the aisle, and, surrounded by the splendid and fashionable circle, stood in front of the clergyman, and in the face of that altar where she was to vow love, honor and obedience to one, to whom, alas, she could only ensure the latter. That, she reflected, was in her power. She cast one glance on her mother; thought upon the reasons of her devoted sacrifice; bowed her head to the clergyman, as the lovely flower bows before the storm it cannot resist, and the ceremony commenced.

Mr. Fleming made his responses in a loud and sonorous voice, precisely in the same manner as he would have done at the Liturgy in the Morning Prayer. The officiating priest dropped his voice into a more piano tone as he put the necessary questions to the bride. Her responses, if she made them, were inarticulate and inaudible; but she breathed hardly, and he was too well-bred not to imagine them made, as things of course, and proceeded.

An icebolt seemed to shoot through her heart as the ring which sealed her fate was placed on her finger; and, as she sunk on her knees to hear the blessing and prayer which concludes the ceremony, she almost wished the pavement would open, and sink her into the charnel-house beneath.

The clergyman closed the book. Every head was bowed down, apparently in a secret aspiration to heaven—when the dead silence of the church was broken by one convulsive sob that burst from a distant part of the building, and sounded like the last effort of a breaking heart.

The bride started to her feet, and sunk senseless into her mother's arms; they two alone, of all the assembly, knew from whose bosom the appalling groan had been extorted.

Every eye was turned in the direction from which the cry had proceeded, but there was no one there; the galleries appeared empty, and many were the

silly expressions of surprise and fear uttered by the young misses, and exclamations of "What can it mean?" "Who can it be?" that came from the lips of the elder ladies of the party. Eau de Cologne and otto of roses were in great request.

The bridegroom only exclaimed, that it was very unceremonious and improper; and adding, that the canaille ought to be excluded from the churches appropriated to people of fashion, followed his bride into the vestry, to see if she was recovered from her fainting fit, and to perform the other ceremonials of the occasion.

Agnes was recovered, but looked paler than before. Her husband now led her out of the church; and as she passed along, her eye was observed to wander in every direction, and to peruse every countenance that gazed at her, with an intensity which seemed to imply an expectation which she dreaded, yet wished to realize. As she entered the carriage, also, she gazed wildly among the crowd that surrounded the church doors, nor withdrew her eager glance until the whirling vehicle left the admiring populace at a distance.

White favors were now distributed among the servants. Coarse jests passed from footman to footman. The different carriages, after a sumptuous breakfast, rolled through the streets of London, all proclaiming the ceremony of the morning; and the papers the next day announced that the happy pair had quitted town to spend the honey-moon at "Fleming-hall," which had recently been newly and splendidly furnished preparatory to the nuptials of the wealthy proprietor.

Years past on, and yet her heart-sickness remained. She could not assimilate her mind with all the little forms and ceremonies which made up the serious business of Mr. Fleming's life, and which pervaded every thing he did. All the warm charities of her heart, in which her present fortune allowed her to indulge, were prevented from giving her the comfort she might otherwise have derived from the exercise of them, by her not being permitted to dispense them in any other way than through the ceremonious means of an almoner.

It was contrary to his received ideas of propriety, that Mrs. Fleming should come in contact with the peasantry on his estate, whom he never condescended to see, except at Christmas, or on some family occasion, when he would imitate older territorial proprietors, by regaling them in his hall or in his park.

Her mother lived but a very short time to enjoy the fruit of the sacrifice, which was thus rendered useless; yet Agnes still made an exemplary wife, though the pallid cheek and attenuated form bespoke the deep inroad which unrequited feeling was gradually making upon her constitution.

Perhaps there is nothing more wearing to the mind than that attention to minutiæ which meets one at every turning; nothing so harassing to the feelings of a warm and generous heart, teeming with all the best impulses of human nature, as to be trammelled with perpetual ceremony, and to be compelled to watch one's looks and words with a lynx-eyed attention, lest something escape that may not be strictly correct according to the established code of punctilious politeness.

The birth of her children opened a source of delight to her; but this was again stopped by the many ceremonies which attended their education, and by the thousand absurd ideas which Mr. Fleming had imbibed, with regard to the children of people of a certain rank.

In short, Mr. Fleming was a man of mere minutiæ and ceremony; his very soul had felt the influence of his dancing master, and seemed to have been put in the stocks with his feet. He attempted to form himself upon the model of Chesterfield, according to the letter, and not according to the spirit of his system; and became a perfect specimen of an iced man.

His religion and hospitality were all mere ceremony without devotion or heartiness. His ideas of the one were satisfied by the exhibition of his person, and by making the responses in an audible voice, in a crimson-lined pew from a morocco-bound prayer-book; and the duties of the other were performed by periodical state-dinners, in which the admiration of his guests at his wines and entertainment was more considered than the kindness of their welcome.

January and July; Cayenne pepper and iced-cream; curry-powder and snow; did not form a stronger contrast than Mr. and Mrs. Fleming: and such were the parents of Amelia and Agnes,—the one all FORM, the other all FEELING.

CHAPTER V.

AMONG the many follies of Fashion, "leader of chattering train," which have influenced society in modern times, may be reckoned the absolute necessity there is, for leaving quiet, respectable and comfortable homes, to resort at a certain period of the year, to some water-drinking or sea-bathing place.

Brighton was the most congenial place in the world to Mr. Fleming. To him it was necessary to breathe the atmosphere of fashion; all other collision was disagreeable; and, therefore, though the quietude of their own estate would have been more conducive to the health of Mrs. Fleming, to Brighton went the family, with a cavalcade of imperial-crowned carriages, which drove up with the whole establishment to their house on the Steyne, to the great pleasure of a hundred attendant tradesmen.

All the family were soon settled in Brighton. The establishment was as complete as in London; for Mr. Fleming's wealth carried every convenience of life with him. In his house there was no make-shifts; every thing was perfectly well appointed, or perhaps too well appointed; for there was an appearance of study even in the modern negligence of his drawing-room and library; and with all these appurtenances of fashion, London hours and customs were, of course, imported likewise.

On their arrival, they found cards were just issued for a juvenile ball to be given to the little scions of the fashionable elite at Brighton. It would not do for the Flemings to be left out: their names were therefore immediately inserted among those on the list at the Pavilion.

From the high rank of Mrs. Fleming's family, from the charm which her talents, even amidst all

the blight of her warm feelings, was known to spread over every circle which she frequented, as well as from the two boroughs which Mr. Fleming's wealth had enabled him to procure, and the ministerial use he made of his votes, his family were ensured from the disappointment which so many had occasion to lament; and perhaps the last was the most influential reason for his invitation.

Mrs. Fleming's maternal heart was gratified with the pleasure she anticipated for her children; Mr. Fleming's consequence was elated; and Lady Pomeroy's vanity excited, by the card which lay at the top of those which already crowded the porcelain tray that graced the table of Mrs. Fleming's drawing-room.

Many were the lectures and numerous the private drillings which the anxious Lady Pomeroy bestowed upon her favorite Amelia:—

> Hands, lips, and eyes, were put to school,
> And each instructed feature had its rule:

and to do her justice on this occasion, Agnes might also have participated in her cares, but that her little heart was so impatient in her anticipations, that she could brook no control, and give no time to the necessary attentions which her aunt required.

Lady Pomeroy impressed upon the mind of Amelia the high and courtly personages she was to meet. Agnes could think of nothing but the dance she was going to enjoy. At length the wished-for evening came—the mysteries of the toilet were completed—Amelia and Agnes were paraded in the drawing-room to the great delight of the father's pride, the mother's affection, and the aunt's vanity; and away rolled the whole group with beating hearts to the scene of princely festivity.

During the ride Amelia preserved her gravity, and never moved from a position in which it was impossible to crush one of the fragile flounces with which her dress was decorated, or disturb the long and beautiful ringlets into which her hair had been trained. Agnes, on the contrary, was wild with expectation, as numerous carriages dashed by their own, either going to or returning from the Pavilion; exclamations of regret at not having arrived, and of fear of being too late for the first quadrille, by turns escaped from her parted lips, as she strained her eyes to catch the first glimpse of the blaze of illumination which surrounded the pavilion, and lighted up the faces of a thousand spectators, which the hope of seeing the company alight from their carriages had collected together.

At length her impatience was gratified—the carriage approached the door—the noiseless steps were let down, and the names of Mr. and Mrs. Fleming and family were passed from servant to servant, till they reached the doors of the reception-room.

Even Amelia's quiet and controlled heart beat a little quicker as she was condescendingly noticed *en passant* by one of those sentences which are the cheap yet amiable commodities with which princes can purchase popularity; and even the impatient queries of Agnes were for a moment hushed to silence, as a royal hand parted the raven locks on her forehead to have a clearer view of the animated countenance which they shaded.

Quadrilles were soon formed—every thing was so well arranged, that none wanted partners—all the young party were assembled, and the dancing was about to commence. Amelia advanced to her set with the dignity of a peacock—Agnes sprang to her place with the agility of a fawn; and to the annoyance of Lady Pomeroy, burst the white sandal which gracefully crossed over her taper ancle. The two ribands lay about half a yard upon the ground like streamers. But Agnes, quite unabashed, and not seeing the frowns of her aunt, soon disentangled her shoe from the stray ribands, and was in a moment with all her heart and soul in the mysteries of the *chasee*, *la trenise*, and *grande ronde*.

Amelia moved through all her steps with the grace and precision of a proficient. Agnes bounded through her part in the dance as though her heart kept company with her feet. Her eyes sparkled with delight—every energy of which her little form was capable was in full exertion.—Her ringlets waved unrestrained around her forehead and shoulders, and she seemed completely in that state which the French call *abandonnement;* and in the midst of all, she was perfectly unconscious of the admiration which her animated display was exciting. At length, her quadrille over, she had leisure to attend to her partner, and for the first time felt, from his height, and the superior quietness of his manners, that he was more of a man than his companions.

For a moment, a slight sense of, she knew not what, lighted up her countenance with a blush of consciousness which most intelligibly said, "What can he think of me?" He had, however, been delighted with the heart and soul which she had infused into every thing she did; and as he drew her arm within his, paid her his boyish compliments with an air which, at the same time that it showed he considered her as a mere child, seemed to say, he began to think *himself* arrived at the first stage of manhood.

At first Agnes was a little dashed with this appearance of superiority; but it soon wore off. As the first ice which her partner handed her diminished, so faded the ice between herself and him. A thousand questions were asked and answered. "Do you like dancing?"—"Oh, amazingly!" and "Who is this? and who is that?"—and "What is this? and what is that?" as a thousand curiosities attracted her attention. From these subjects they passed to others of more immediate interest to themselves. The whole of their own little histories were detailed to each other. Before their ice and quadrille were ended, Agnes had told her partner all the secrets of her nursery—the plagues of her governess, with her *régime*—her calisthenics—and her ceremonies—her fear of her papa, and her devoted love for her mother. The Honorable Master Trevor had sense enough to enjoy the openness and sincerity of heart with which all this childish detail was made, and, in return, informed his now listening companion, that he was an Eton boy; proudly boasted of his exploits at cricket, and the last Monten—of his excursion to Windsor—and all the numerous tricks in which he had joined his school companions, and the jeopardy in which they had placed him; to all of which the interested Agnes listened with nearly as much attention, as

we may suppose Desdemona paid to the "hair breadth 'scapes" of Othello.

In the mean time, Amelia passed through the evening entirely to the satisfaction of Lady Pomeroy, and when the banquet was announced, displayed her ringlets and her dress free from the slightest disarrangement, and a cheek quite unheated from dancing.

Agnes, on the contrary, with a glowing cheek, and panting from exertion, again took the arm of Trevor, who folded her shawl over her shoulders with a grace that would have done honor to three-and-twenty, instead of fifteen, which were all the summers he had yet numbered—and life had, as yet been summer to him. The liveliness of the one, and the attention of the other, had been a source of attraction to each of these young people; and with that incipient feeling, which in after-life grows into flirtation, they had agreed, early in the evening, to manage matters so as to sit next to each other at supper.

The shawl was made the convenience to accomplish this, and they followed the crowd, and placed themselves at the table with hearts, in which there was not one feeling discordant with the gayety which pervaded the scene.

How different from those who contemplated them! how many anxious and corroded hearts; how many grievous feelings; how many fears of the loss of royal favor; and how many hopes of supplanting each other, were concealed under the diamond stomachers and necklaces, and blue and red ribands and sparkling stars which surround them!

How lamentable, that in time, all those hearts which were then so light and gay, should become corrupted by passions which sprang up in a court as in a hotbed! How melancholy, that the open brow should in time become contracted with all the baneful feelings of envy; and that court intrigue should succeed to all the emulation of excellence, which is the only characteristic of youthful ambition!

Amelia sipped her wine, and played with her trifle in silence, uninterrupted, except by an elegant inclination of her head, when one of her youthful partners challenged her to a glass of wine.

Agnes, delighted by the thousand forms of temples, cascades, pyramids, corronets, &c., into which the barley-sugar had been tortured by the confectioner's ingenuity, and which did indeed glitter in the blaze of a hundred wax candles, like fairy palaces of amber, could not conceal her delight, but rattled forth her admiration to the amusement of the courtly people who were immediately around her, while Lady Pomeroy looked and frowned, and nodded her head in vain.

At length the carriages began to be announced, and the unwelcome sound of "Lady Trevor's carriage is ready," struck upon the ears of Agnes and her youthful partner.

With childish delight they had enjoyed every thing together—all was pleasure—and they had never thought of parting, or dreamt there could be one unpleasant sensation attendant upon an evening of so much enjoyment.

Young as they were, however, the moment of separation gave a pang for which neither of them could account, and which neither of them could understand.

Trevor tendered his hand to her for the last time, and was whirled away in his mother's carriage, leaving Agnes, to her great surprise, no longer the pleased spectatress of the magnificence before her. The separation from her partner had left a blank which there was nothing to fill up; from the almost romp, she became silent and pensive—the lights seemed no longer to burn so brightly—the pastry palaces had lost their claims to admiration—the sparkling of the champagne had evaporated—she became listless and fatigued, and she sat absorbed in herself, silent and sorrowful, and almost in tears, in the midst of that very scene, which a few moments before had so much delighted her; and listened now as anxiously for, as just before she had dreaded, the announcement of her mother's carriage, which soon bore her and her sister to their homes, where sleep soon gave to them again the fairy scene of the royal revels.

Happy stage of life, when sleep and a few hours are sufficient to obliterate the greatest evils incidental to it—when our pleasures leave the heart uncorrupted, and when our sorrows are washed out by the tears they occasion—

Those tears forgot as soon as shed.

CHAPTER VI.

Whether the present characters of Amelia and Agnes gave already indications—the one, of a creature all "form;" and the other, of a being all "feeling;" and whether we might prophesy those events of their after-life, which it is the intention of these pages to record, the sequel will show.

The Trevors and the Flemings, although moving in the same circle, were not intimate: they met in the unceasing round of fashion; but they did not visit.

The Trevors, proud of an ancient name and of a family that could reckon sixteen quarterings in their heraldry, looked upon Mr. Fleming as a *parvenu;* and Mr. Fleming, with all his innate respect for a legitimate rank, still felt the consequence and pride of wealth, and was offended at the little attention that was paid him by the Trevors.

For these slights, Mr. Fleming consoled himself by the superiority of his establishment, and by the splendor of his parties, while the Trevors affected to despise the magnificent entertainments to which they received no cards; and to consider and talk of them as the attempts of a *parvenu*, to hide the meanness of his origin in the gorgeous and tasteless display of the wealth which purchased his place in society.

It was true, Mrs. Fleming's family on both sides was equal with their own; but then a woman reduces herself to the same rank with the man she marries, but never elevates him to her own; and Mrs. Fleming was not a woman to receive attentions that did not extend to her husband, or to keep up connexions with any acquaintance that in the least degree slighted Mr. Fleming, to whom she made a point of performing all those duties and attentions which were within her own power to

command, the more punctiliously, because she was conscious there were many into which she had never yet been able to school that heart which had been won and lost before he had any claim to its affections.

These feelings on each side had kept the families of the Trevors and the Flemings separate; but the young people were of that happy age which knew not, or did not understand, these distinctions; and the next morning after the ball, therefore, brought young Trevor to pay a visit to his little partner.

This was an attention, however, which was so much disapproved by his lady-mother, and so very coldly received by Mr. Fleming, that it was not repeated; and our young Etonian was compelled to watch for the Miss Flemings in their walks, as the only means of continuing his acquaintance with Agnes.

The fact was, that Trevor at fifteen, from his association wtth boys of sixteen and eighteen, who imagined themselves men, began to think that he was himself approaching to the period when he might be designated Mister instead of Master; and having been really struck with the fascinating spirits of Agnes, he fancied himself in love, and began to think that he should himself have a confidential communication to make to his school-circle in return for those to which he had often listened, and wondered when he too should find an opportunity of performing the same feats as those detailed by his companions.

The house occupied by the Trevors was not so far distant from the Flemings, but that our youthful spring of nobility could watch the movements of the young ladies; the moment, therefore, that they quitted the Steyne with their governess, was the signal for the commencement of his own morning excursion.

While within sight of his domicile, he wandered carelessly along the cliff; but still with his eye fixed upon the objects of his pursuit—for he had learned a few of the *ruses d'amour* from his more experienced companions at Eton—as soon, however, as he imagined himself out of the pale of observation, he quickened his pace, and directed it towards the little group of pedestrians on the beach, whom he soon contrived to overtake.

His presence was always welcome to Agnes, because it gave her the opportunity of talking of the juvenile ball, and was never unacceptable to Amelia, because he was never deficient in those attentions which her aunt had always taught her to expect as her due from the other sex; and Amelia, cold as she was, was much more versed in all these technicalities than Agnes, who was only to be taught the value of these attractions by her own heart.

When the governess was with them, Trevor knew how to make himself welcome by a hundred little flattering words, which were rendered still more acceptable by coming from the lips of a little honorable; and when they were only accompanied by the maid, he remembered how maids had been silenced by his companions in the neighborhood of Windsor, and he tried the same recipe. Boys learn something at Eton; and so they ought, for it is an expensive place.

By this perseverance, and these means, he contrived generally to be the companion of their morning stroll. He wandered with them on the cliff—picked up shells and star-fish for them on the beach—became an expert macadamiser of pebbles—threw ducks and drakes on the bright calm sea—and made love to Agnes in his boyish way; that is, they stood on the margin of the tide, till the white curling wave rose to their feet and then he would snatch her away before it could wet her black satin slippers—then he would look out for the prettiest pebbles and shells—climb the cliff for any flower that graced the sterile rock—or dash into the wave to rescue a piece of sea-weed from the retreating tide to add to her collection. But in the midst of these more boisterous and boyish attentions to Agnes, he never forgot to pay others to Amelia, which were quite as acceptable, since he never presented a pebble or a shell without a bow; and he became a favorite of her's, because he never met or parted from her without taking off his hat; and though she was shocked at the hearty shaking of hands, which was the never-failing accompaniment of the meeting and separation of Agnes and Trevor; and though she could never join in their hearty laughs which were echoed by the cliffs when the waves were too quick for them, and filled their shoes with salt-water; yet his prepetual politeness—his never-failing attention when there was a channel furrowed into the sand by the sea, or any piece of rock in the way to be got over, reconciled her to his company, and she always welcomed him with her placid smile.

As for Agnes, she knew nothing—she thought of nothing but the enjoyment of the moment. She delighted in the company of Trevor, because he entered into her amusements—all was gaiety and sunshine:

> No sense had she of ills to come,
> No care beyond to-day.

Trevor himself knew not the nature of his own feelings; he was in a precocious state of boyhood. He had heard his elder companions talk of love, and boast of successes, of the meaning of which he was ignorant. He saw Agnes; his young heart and imagination were attracted by her charms of person, and her *naiveté* of conversation, and he thought it would be manly, and give him something to tell about on his return to Eton; having, in his own mind, determined to represent his lady as a girl of sixteen, instead of thirteen. With this view, he pursued with indefatigable perseverance his morning rambles, for the purpose of joining the sisters, till he experienced sensations for the youthful Agnes, that, young as he was, made his meeting with her a happiness, and his parting from her a misery.

Before he sought his pillow at night he would throw up his sash and look if there were a light still in her window, and his first glance in the morning was in the same direction.

Perhaps, too, his youthful vanity was flattered by the evident pleasure with which his attentions were received, and a zest was added to these meetings by the necessity which his heart taught him there was for some degree of secresy, as to the extent of the attentions he was paying to this branch of the family of the Flemings.

Thus matters proceeded at Brighton—the world

came and went—stage coaches increased—the town was full to suffocation—prosperity made the inhabitants insolent—visiters of fashion became disgusted—royalty deserted an ungrateful people, whose fortunes had been made by its sunshine—and Mr. Fleming quitted Brighton.

CHAPTER VII.

The London winter "commencing in July," as Lord Byron satirically observes, had now begun: the streets of St. James's rattled beneath the carriages of the wealthy and fashionable, and the dust of Hyde Park flew in clouds beneath the horses of the *elegants*, who equestrianised, and tilburised, and cabriolised, in the short intervals between a breakfast at two and a dinner at eight.

All was bustle at the west end of the town; the clubs were full of lounging men, and the milliners' shops were full of expensive women; balls and bible societies were crowded to suffocation; the crush room was a perfect jam; fans could not keep the Blues cool at the Royal institution; and Almack's and the House of Commons were well attended.

In short, all London life was at its zenith of animation.

Mrs. Fleming's table was already inundated with those pasteboard conveniences for visiting before the family was completely settled in Grosvenor Square, and she felt herself compelled, in spite of increasing infirmity, to enter on her usual winter life.

Neither the air of the downs nor the breezes of the sea had added to her strength; indeed they were both too sharp; her disorder had rendered her too weak to find any thing but mischief in their bracing qualities; but as she felt it must be the same everywhere, and that nothing can "administer to a mind diseased," she bore it all calmly, and patiently, and silently, amidst the absurd forms and ceremonies of Lady Pomeroy, and the apathy and technical propriety of Mr. Fleming. The more she felt the increase of her complaint, which was unperceived, and silently stealing her from life, the more intense became her anxiety for her darling Agnes. It was in vain, amidst her crowd of acquaintance, that she could look for one female friend in whom to confide her fears, on whom she could rely as a guardian, and supporter, and adviser of her child, when her own guiding spirit should be snatched from her.

All her society consisted only of such persons as came within the pale admitted by Mr. Fleming to be fashionable and proper; and the only one of her sisters who was still living, was a complete, but a mere woman of fashion. All her hope, therefore, and all her trial, was to live.

In the mean time, the different and contrasted characteristics of her two daughters grew with their growth, and strengthened with their strength. Amelia went on progressing in her music, her dancing, and her manners, and time only developed more strongly the ardent temperamant, the acute feeling, and the romantic tenderness of Agn .

For Amelia, her mother could feel little anxiety; life for her seemed destined to be a smooth stream, in which she would sail safely with the current; she had no passions, no feelings to hurry her out of it: but for Agnes, it was far different; with every accession of knowledge came a new sensation; every hour gave indications of a heart that would be the victim of circumstance, and every event of life had some influence upon her character.

It was in vain that her mother wished to repress the ardor of her disposition. The ethereal spirit of existence was too strong within her; she had imbibed too much of her mother's disposition to be guided by the formal rules that influenced Amelia. Her heart required icing by the hand of experience and misfortune, ere it could determine to believe that friendship and feeling were too generally names which engendered nothing but disappointment.

The necessary routine of London life, and such a London life as Mr. Fleming thought proper to lead, inevitably separated Mrs. Fleming from her children more than she wished. Still every moment she could steal from etiquette and fashion was devoted to them—or rather to Agnes, whose heart she attempted to school, but in vain, into some of those rules which by repressing its ardency might fence it against future disappointment.

About this period, there was a great deal of political discussion on the subject of the India possessions. Great extension of empire in that quarter of the world had been obtained by the British arms:—there were great outcries against the monopolies, the persecutions, the peculations, and the corruptions, which must always exist in large governments so far removed from the seat of the mother-country.

Mr. Fleming being a large proprietor of India stock, as well as a staunch supporter of the measures of government, was of course deeply interested in the question · and not only voted both in Leadenhall street and St. Stephen's, but filled his house by political dinners, given with a view to its discussion, and of course frequented the houses of those who were of the same party with himself.

At this period when a great quantity of evidence was collecting from all quarters, there arrived from India a celebrated judge, who had gone out very early in life as a barrister: and who, by dint of talent, perseverance, and integrity, had so won his way to opulence and fame, that in process of time he had been made a judge, and for some political service rewarded by the title of Baron Walmar—an unusual compliment to a judge in India.

He had exercised his judicial capacity in the east now some years; and had devoted much of his time and influence to the amelioration and correction of the corruptions of the government, and in repressing the eagerness of commercial speculation, which, at the same time that it could only be gratified by injustice, he foresaw must in time lead rather to the weakening than to the strengthening of our empire in that part of the world.

In the midst of his legal avocations, he had made himself entirely master of a subject which he was known to have investigated deeply: and now that ill health and a large fortune induced him to

resign his high official situation, and return to seek repose in his own country, his decisions upon the subject were looked up to with anxiety by all parties.

An eye witness of the acts of government, an acquaintance with the manners, the customs, the rights, the laws, and the inhabitants of the countries in which he had so long been a sojourner, gave the stamp of truth, and claimed attention to any judgment which he had formed.

No wonder, then, at the board of India proprietors, by whom he was visited and invited, that ministerial and opposition members, interested in the question, courted him in all directions, or that Baron Walmer should be considered a powerful coadjutor to whichever party he should embrace.

But Baron Walmer was a man of no party. He viewed the great question abstractedly, as it bore upon the first principles of humanity and justice.

His known sense of justice created the respect, and his resplendent talents commanded the admiration of all parties. So that in all the society in which any discussion of India affairs was interesting—and this was very much so at Mr. Fleming's—the question of what Baron Walmer would say was always a matter of speculation and anxiety.

Little accustomed to feel any interest in the question, Mrs. Fleming, to please her husband, submitted to a great deal of society that was far from agreeable, which this subject introduced to her house; and Mr. Fleming told her it was his intention to get introduced to Baron Walmer the first opportunity, that he might be added to their oriental *coteries*.

At length cards were received for a dinner at Sir Frederick Rupee's, in Portland Place, celebrated for its India discussions, mulligatawny and Madeira, and Mr. Fleming was delighted at receiving a hint that Baron Walmer had agreed to join the party.

Although from the high character for philanthropy and talent which the world had bestowed upon Walmer, Mrs. Fleming felt much interest in his name, yet she would have declined the invitation. But Mr. Fleming was too well aware of her powers of conversation, and of the charms of her society, to go unassisted, with such a powerful addition to the temptation which he intended to hold out to the Baron to visit Grosvenor Square, as his wife's manner presented.

In the habit of pleasing him, she stifled the effects of increased indisposition, and repressed the melancholy thoughts which latterly had been almost her constant companions of the hours devoted to society, as well as those devoted to rest and silence.

In spite of her utmost efforts, her imagination would recur to the earlier scenes of her youthful days; and call up in vivid colors all that she had then felt, and all that she had since suffered.

She anticipated a speedy conclusion to all; and she was already passing her hours in that kind of dreamy existence, which made her frequently forget and neglect the realities of life.

In short, her physical powers were unable to cope much longer with her mental struggles; and she found herself giving way to that kind of morbid sensibility which a long series of unrequited feeling is almost always certain to produce in the human heart. The day for the dinner came; and Mr. Fleming, in his eager anticipation of an introduction to Lord Walmer, exhibited an unusual degree of animation; and having intimated to his lady his wishes that every thing should be done to further an acquaintance with the Baron, retired to make his toilet.

Mrs. Fleming, more than usually melancholy, kept her daughters in her dressing-room till the last moment, and tried to be diverted by the sprightly sallies of Agnes, as she admired the ornaments with which Mr. Fleming's vanity had filled her dressing-case.

When the carriage was announced, she had some difficulty in separating herself from their embraces, and sighed that she could not devote the whole evening to their caresses.

On arriving in Portland place, the principal part of the company had assembled, and were as usual dispersed in unconnected groups through the drawing-room, conversing on different subjects, and killing that abominable quarter of an hour, which is in many houses now extended to three quarters, before dinner.

The ladies were discussing dresses, and the gentlemen politics; but all were in some degree anxious for the arrival of Lord Walmer.

To the India proprietors he was a hero; and the men were accordingly anticipating, in various ways, his sentiments on the subject connected with their interests.

The ladies, however, had different opinions. "Well, I am sure!" cried one belle from amidst a group of young ladies, who seemed rather impatient at a delay which prevented exclusive conversation with some favored swain, who was to give them his arm to the dinner-room,—"Well! I'm sure, I'm not so mighty anxious about an old judge."

"Oh! but Lord Walmer is not so old."

"Aye! but then he is as sensible, and that is as bad, and talks about nothing but India, and pagodas, and Brama, and Bombay; and I hear so much about it all at home, that I declare I am quite tired of the subject. Besides, I like nobody who is not romantic; and nothing that comes from India can be romantic. Calcutta is certainly the very antipodes to the enchanting regions of romance."

"Oh!—But what think you of an Indian chief?—or a Brahmin—or a beautiful widowed bride, sacrificing herself on the funeral pile of a beloved husband?"—asked a young lady with blue eyes, just come out.

"Oh! that," returned the other, "is quite delightful; one might make something of a romance out of such persons and incidents as those;—but then the India Company is quite a different thing—they try to stop these romantic sacrifices—to extirpate the Brahmins, and to kill the Indian chiefs; or, what is quite as bad, to make them wear coats and *troisièmes*, which must spoil their figures.—But then Pa and the yellow people who dine in Harley Street never mention these romantic things; but talk about the price of tea, and the duty on shawls and bandanas:—oh! 'tis quite horrid."

"Oh, yes, quite horrid! and then Leadenhal[l] Street—what can be interesting connected with Leadenhall Street?"

"Not half so interesting, or delightful, certainly, as the idea of a fellow creature enduring the agonies of death in its most horrid shape, through an absurd superstition," uttered a grave voice.

"There now, you are always so satirical, Miss Musters. To be sure, I did not think of their agonies, which, I dare say, as you say, must be very great, considering they are burnt alive. But yet it is a very romantic idea; and shows great devotion to their husbands, and all that. Only think, now, a beautiful creature casting her eyes up to heaven—then down on the corpse of her deceased love—then mounting the pile, she wraps a bandana shawl gracefully round her beautiful form, and resigns herself to the devouring flames!"

"Oh dear!" exclaimed the blue eyed young lady,—"I should think the fire would render a shawl unnecessary; and China crape hangs quite as gracefully.

"Oh, certainly, certainly,—quite as gracefully—and it would be a pity to burn a beautiful India shawl—they cost so much. But where can this judge, this Lord Walmer be? I suppose dinner won't be announced till he comes."

"I should think not. His presence is anxiously expected; and I assure you, in spite of your prejudice against those who come from India, you will find him a very interesting person," said Miss Musters.

"What! isn't he yellow? and hasn't he got a liver complaint?"

"No, he is very pale; and his wan looks depict a disease of the mind, more than of the body."

"Bless me! how interesting! a disease of the heart, instead of the liver! I quite long to see him. Have you any idea of what the mental disease is? was he ever in love? perhaps disappointed in some early passion."

"Whatever it might have been, he has not been selfish enough to suffer it to interfere with his duty towards his fellow creatures. He has devoted a series of years to the amelioration of the state of the native Indians, and to the correction of the abuses made in that country."

"Oh, he has? Well, that is very good I must say" drawled out the young lady, half yawning, and turning with some frivolous remark to her young companions.

This conversation had occurred in the hearing of Mrs. Fleming, and she had become unconsciously interested in the person who formed the principal subject of it. A wish arose in her heart to see this Baron Walmer. At this moment she heard his name called out by the servant in the front drawing room, and it was immediately succeeded by that bustle and subsequent silence which always follows the arrival of a distinguished visiter.

Dinner was announced so immediately after the arrival of the Baron, that no introduction could possibly take place; and the party was so numerous, and Mrs. Fleming, who never thought of precedence and etiquette, when left to herself, went down stairs so much in the rear, that she never even caught a glimpse of his person.

The bustle attendant upon seating the party, and a recurrence to her own feelings, had banished the temporary curiosity which the previous conversation had excited, and she took her place without a glance in the direction of the upper end of the table, where she might naturally suppose the Baron to be seated.

All the common places of the dinner-table immediately commenced; wines were enumerated and handed—course succeeded course; and the confusion having a little subsided conversation began to be more distinctly understood.

At this moment a question of considerable importance to the subject which was occupying the minds of most of the gentlemen at table, was put by the person who had handed Mrs. Fleming down to dinner, and who of course sat next to her.

The host immediately requested Baron Walmer to reply and to give his opinion upon a matter, of which no one could judge as well as himself.

Mrs. Fleming was at this moment engaged in taking wine; and being in the act of bowing in an opposite direction, was prevented turning towards the speaker, to hear whom, every body was hushed to silence.

The Baron spoke—Mrs. Fleming started; what did she hear? The voice struck upon her ear—upon her heart:

> ———'twas like the stealing
> Of summer wind thro' some wreathed shell;
> Each secret winding—each inmost feeling
> Of her whole soul echoed to its spell!

She moved suddenly round; the Baron's face was turned towards where she was seated; their eyes met, and in an instant, Agustus Clifton and Agnes Doraton remembered and recognised each other.

The last time she had heard that voice was in the convulsive sob, at St. James's church. The years that had passed since rolled away from her memory. It seemed as though the church, her mother, her lover, were still present; her head became dizzy; she grasped the cloth with a slight shuddering convulsion; the glass dropped from her trembling hand, and she sank insensible in her chair.

CHAPTER VIII.

How little do they know of true woman who speak lightly of a woman's love; and yet is it a fashion among poets, and novelists, and essayists, and philosophers, to compare female hearts and affections to any thing that is light, and volatile, and ephemeral in nature!

Passion springs up in a man's heart spontaneously and quickly, like those flowers which we see by the way-side, where accident may have scattered the seed in a light though fertile soil, and lying close to the surface, they blossom, and are blighted by the very sun which called them into existence. But in a woman's heart they require to be sown with a careful hand, and cultivated with kindly attention; but when once they have taken root, the fibres strike downwards; and though the flowers may be blighted by after circumstances, or chilled by coldness or unkindness, the roots are seldom

eradicated. Like the vase in which roses have once been distilled.

> You may break, you may ruin the vase, if you will,
> But the scent of the roses will hang round it still.

It was thus with Mrs. Fleming. Her early love had been repressed by her principles, and her determination to conquer it had been aided by her high sense of duty and religion. Many were the struggles which she had with her rebellious heart and thoughts in the first years of her marriage. But time and active employment, the grand recipe, and, at length, a mother's duties, gradually lessened the influence and the memory of other days and other hopes; and to a common, or even to an observing eye, Clifton and all the circumstances of their short, though delicious intercourse, appeared forgotten.

These feelings still remained at the bottom of her heart, deeply hidden, but still there, and added their influence, unperceived, to the other causes of the disease which was gradually wearing out her fragile frame, and sinking her to the grave: like the silent and secret working poison of Tophania, whose use was so common once in Italy, though its progress was imperceptible, its effect was not less fatal.

The generosity of Clifton, by never again appearing before her, saved her many a pang, and materially assisted her in the struggle.

Sometimes, amidst the numerous crowded parties to which she was led, first as a bride, and afterwards as being a part of those duties which Mr. Fleming thought his wife ought to perform, a stray glance might be hastily shot through the company in quest of an object which was not there, and a stray thought would sometimes wonder what had become of him. Perhaps the glance and the thought might create an involuntary feeling of disappointment; but her good sense acknowledged that it was better they should not meet; and she knew Clifton well enough to be certain that it was her he considered in thus withdrawing himself for a time from his usual haunts.

Too conscious to make any inquiries, she was ignorant that he had quitted his country; ignorant that having lost her he considered that he had lost every thing, and had withdrawn himself not only from the society in which he had lived, but from his native soil, to try his fortune, and seek a cure for a hopeless passion beneath other suns in distant climes.

Young and inexperienced as it was, Clifton's was no common mind; his heart had not been *usé* by those intrigues into which the youth of the present day plunge so early, and from which too many of them unfortunately form their opinions of the whole female sex.

He had loved with all the vigor of a young and first love. There was none of the namby-pamby sentimentality—none of that fritted feeling which so often characterises passion at his age; it was pure, wholesome, manly love, founded on a thorough knowledge of the worth of the object; a love that promised to stand the test of years, and was not to be conquered even by disappointment.

That kind of love which would have guided a woman through all the storms of life; that would have grappled with ill fortune for the sake of her protection, and have mastered her in the hopes of procuring independence for the object of his affection. Clifton knew that he was loved; he knew that it was through no fickleness that another had been wedded.—He was quite aware that her pas sion for him was as fixed and unchangeable as his own, and that nothing but maternal influence and a high sense of filial duty had made her relinquish him for another.

Clifton knew and felt all this; and knew that the best thing for both of them was decided separation. Bereft as he was of its principal joy, he did not meanly and cowardly give up life:—he had lost its sweetness, but its vigor still remained unimpaired. He felt that stir within, which taught him he was not born for an idler on the face of the earth. His love was lost; but fame still remained a bright object in the perspective of existence; and fame he determined to pursue—not as heretofore, through the flowry and seductive paths of poetry, but through the thorny labyrinth of his profession. Poetry, either to read or to write, at least when it is felt, softens and enervates the heart. Clifton felt it to be dangerous, and he avoided it altogether.

India, at the time, presented a wide field for professional exertion—a mass of cases and actions had accumulated from the extension of territory, and from commercial and territorial disputes of all kinds. The oriental vineyard presented a plentiful harvest, and there were but few laborers to divide the toil and the profits.

With some little difficulty an appointment was procured; and without the dangerous indulgence of seeing her even once again, Clifton quitted the object of his first love and of his dearest hopes, to struggle with his disappointed feelings, and to seek for power and fortune in a distant country.

On his arrival, he found plenty of occupation in his professional capacity; and the number of abuses which presented themselves for reformation, the number of injustices which it was in his power to remedy, ever gave him the best balm of a wounded mind—constant occupation.

At the period of his arrival, there was a great opening for an independent and upright advocate —and this Clifton was: the consequence was, his employment by all parties, and the subsequent confidence of the administration which intrusted to his judgment many of the most important regulations for the government of the new provinces: in all of which, Clifton so managed as to beget confidence between the conquered and the conquerors.

These employments rapidly led to a fortune and a rank as highly honorable to himself as it was to the government that employed him.

At length a question of great political importance arising with regard to our possessions in the East, it became his duty, as possessing the best and most elaborate information on the subject, to come to England; and though his heart ached at the necessity, yet Clifton was not a man who neglected even a painful duty for the gratification of his own private feelings.

The banished and pennyless Clifton, therefore, after a laps of fifteen years, returned to England the rich, the respected, and the talented Baron Walmer.

The sight of his native country recalled all the circumstances of his youth:—again the form of Agnes flitted before his eyes. But his feelings had too long been too well regulated to permit the slightest tinge of passion to characterise these recollections.

CHAPTER IX.

Every thing had heen prepared for the splendid fete at Mr. Fleming's, which he trusted was to identify him as the head of the party in Oriental politics. Nothing that his immense wealth could procure in the way of luxury and of costliness, had been omitted; and all those who go into society with no other views than those of killing time, or seeking entertainment, were looking forward with gay anticipations to the evening fixed for this splendid ball, which they were aware would be rendered one of the most brilliant of the season, by the taste of the hostess, and by the vanity of the host.

Poor Mrs. Fleming, acting upon the habitual impulse of her life, that of repairing the involuntary fault of not loving her husband, by the minutest attention to his wishes, had herself given directions to the various artificers who had been employed in the new furniture, and in the splendid temporary decorations which were everywhere scattered about the apartments. These works were proceeding with the utmost rapidity even when their directress was brought into the house, after the death-blow had been given; and as she was borne to the bed in which in so few hours she was to be a corpse, her fading eye fell upon nothing but all these elegant trappings of vanity—these splendid preparations for festivity.

How changed the scene! there were now no clattering of hammers, no officious bustling of servants, hurrying to and fro with the appurtenances of a banquet—no busy upholsterer, with damask hangings and silk draperies; all these were stopped, and were succeeded by those silent ones which prepare the dead for their last habitation.

Alas! how little thought Mrs. Fleming the morning before, when she had expressed a fear that the flowers which were every where scattered through the apartments and verandahs, would not live through the heat of the atmosphere, on the night of her party, that she herself would be an earlier victim than they—that she herself would drop into the grave before the freshness of their transient blossoms had passed away.

The blooming orange tree, the bright carnation, the crimson rose, seemed to rise in mockery at the frailer tenure by which mortality held its life and freshness. For they still shed their sweets, and spread their bright blossoms in the air, while the hand that had reared and cultivated them lay cold and senseless.

All the servants moved about the house with noiseless tread; and the formula of grief was strictly preserved. Gillow had received a *carte blanche* to do every thing that was proper according to the rank of the deceased; every thing was hushed and silent from the library in which Mr. Fleming and Lady Pomeroy sat in a kind of state grief, down to the steward's room and servant's hall.

The customary suit of solemn black was ordered for all the household, and the silence was only disturbed by the muffled knock which announced the numerous cards of condolence that poured in upon the widower and Lady Pomeroy.

Such were the outward symptoms of "funeral woe" for the departed Mrs. Fleming; yet, although she had been a most exemplary wife, a kind mistress, and a sincere friend, the only real distress evinced for her loss was exhibited in the nursery, where the little Agnes was literally overwhelmed with her grief.

The floods of tears that rolled down her cheeks—her convulsed sobs—her utter incapacity to attend to any of the common consolations offered by her maid, or by the governess, who, under Mrs. Fleming's direction superintended the studies of her children; all showed that young as she was, she had still years sufficient to appreciate the loss of a mother—a mother who had been her resource in all her little difficulties; upon whose bosom she had a thousand times been hushed to repose, when chidden by her father and Lady Pomeroy.

Poor Agnes! great as was her childish grief, as great as her little heart was capable of experiencing, yet how little could her infant mind appreciate the measure and extent of her loss, or its influence on all her future life!

Amelia suffered too, but she suffered in character; a few silent tears stole down her quiet cheeks; but she seemed to feel the argument of the maid, that too much weeping would make her eyes red, and she therefore checked her tears, but kept up a silence appropriate to the melancholy circumstance, and responded sigh for sigh with Lady Pomeroy on her occasional visit to their room.

This lady almost chid Agnes for the violence of her grief; but finding that she only rendered it still more violent, she retired, lest the sight of her tears and sound of her sobs should discompose her nerves, and render her incapable of administering consolation to her brother; her own was derived from receiving cards of condolence, and giving all the necessary orders for the funeral, which Mr. Fleming determined should be as splendid as the rank of her ancestors and his own wealth authorised.

It was some consolation to him, also, to read paragraphs in the various papers in which his deceased wife's progenitors were named.

The leading foible of his soul was gratified, in spite of his loss, by reading that—"On this morning early, the much admired and universally respected Mrs. Fleming, died suddenly at the family mansion in Grosvenor Square Her death is universally regretted by the world of fashion, in whose hemisphere she shone one of the most brilliant stars. Mrs. Fleming was grand-daughter of the Marquis of T——, by the mother's side, and of the Earl of D——, by the father's. She was first cousin to the late Duke of B——, and niece to the Countess of T——, the Marchioness of W——, and the Dowager Duchess of B——; and was connected by blood or by marriage with most of the noble families in the country. The immediate

cause of her death was the bursting of a blood vessel, in consequence of a fit of coughing after the splendid banquet given yesterday by Sir Frederick Rupee. Mr. Fleming and family are inconsolable."

This was the account which gratified Mr. Fleming in the columns of the Morning Post, and other polite papers, all of which attributed her death to the same circumstance—the bursting of a blood vessel; it was, indeed, the bursting of the greatest—the heart!

But who could image that the gay, the envied, the rich Mrs. Fleming, with every luxury at command, one of the leaders of fashion, one moving in the gayest circles of the metropolis, rolling over the streets in splendid equipages, and basking in the sunshine of prosperity, could die of a broken heart? and yet it was true!

A broken heart is not one of the acknowledged diseases of our nature; it is never mentioned in the annual bills of mortality, and yet it is a much more common cause of death than we are aware of.

How many neglected parents and wives—how many struggling through disappointment after disappointment, and hope blighted after hope, till nothing remains desirable in life, thus yield it up with a broken heart, while their death is attributed to consumption, or some of the legitimate and admitted causes of death.

The routine of Mr. Fleming's family went on as usual; dinners were served in the dining-room, steward's room and servant's hall; for the great machine of life must go on in its accustomed course. No mortality short of a general plague arrests its customary progress.

The event was not yet so generally known, but that there came several tickets for balls, and cards for dinners, to the deceased.

At night the inmates of the house retired early: there was a melancholy cessation from their usually dissipated hours.

A person was appointed to sit up in the next room with the corpse; and she as well as the rest of the household were soon buried in sleep.

All slept but Agnes; she still sobbed and could not compose her grief: she however was put to bed, and buried her little face and weeping eyes in the pillow, still calling upon her mamma.

Unable to sleep, she sat up, and finding that her sister and their maid slept soundly, she stole out of bed, and creeping along the private passage which communicated with her mother's apartment, through which Mrs. Fleming always visited her children night and morning, and derived in their society the principal consolation of her life, she entered the chamber of death.

The sight of the pallid corpse as it reposed on the bed merely covered with a sheet—the marble arms extended—and the placid face, looking much more tranquil than it was wont to look in life; the tapers that burnt at the foot of the couch—the black trappings which were hung around, occasioned a fresh burst of grief from the agonized heart of the poor girl, and throwing herself on the bed, she clasped the corpse in her arms, and gave way to the bitterness of her agony. The grief of childhood, however, is not like that of maturer years. The agony which can give way to tears is much sooner relieved than that dry, concentrated grief of the heart which finds no vent but in the sighs that threaten to break it. So Agnes soon sobbed herself to sleep on that cold bosom of her dead parent, from which she had first drawn the warm stream of her own existence, and on which so many of her infant troubles had been hushed to repose.

How long she had slept. Agnes was insensible; but on awaking, she perceived with terror, a tall figure, dressed in black, bending over the couch of death; his look was benign, however, though solemn, and the warm tear of manly grief stood in his eye, as he hushed her to silence, and still gazed intently on the corpse.

His cloak was thrown back; the light of the tapers shone on his pale features, whose manly beauty had not been displaced, but merely changed in character by his grief; his uplifted hands were clasped, and his lip seemed to move in silent prayers either for the grief of the living or for the fate of the departed.

Agnes would have screamed, but the touching solemnity of his countenance, the evident participation of her grief, and the pitying kindness of his look, took from her all fear, and she raised up her rosy, healthy cheek, still wet with her tears, from the pale breast upon which it had been pillowed, and with which it formed the perfect contrast of the living and dead; and gazed on the stranger with wonder, not unmixed with awe.

As the tears rolled down the stranger's pale face, her own flowed afresh; and she permitted him without shrinking, to take her from the corpse of her mother, to peruse her countenance, and to utter a solemn benediction over her, while he made an audible vow never to forsake the child of a mother who had been so dear to him.

He pressed the child to his breast, imprinted one kiss on her forehead, placed her again upon the couch, cast one more mournful look and almost agonized glance upon the corpse, and quitted the apartment; leaving the youthful Agnes almost uncertain whether she had seen a spirit or a human being. But she had gazed so intently upon the form and features of the stranger, that she felt she should never forget them.

In the morning Agnes was found by the attendants asleep by the side of her mother's corpse; and her tale of the stranger was received by her chiding aunt and father as the effect of a dream, caused by the exciting circumstances under which she was placed.

The house was now given up to the undertakers; a leaden coffin cased in mahogany, and covered with crimson velvet, decorated with escutcheons, in which the arms furnished Mr. Fleming, by the flattery of the Herald's Office, were blended with the more ancient and honorable shield of the Dorntons.

To all these minutiæ Mr. Fleming attended with peculiar care, as though he feared the gloomy tenants of the tomb might not be aware of the rank and pretensions of the deceased.

Nothing was omitted that could bespeak these, and make them felt and acknowledged by all who witnessed the formulæ of death.

At length the mournful morning appointed for the funeral arrived, and was ushered in by the tolling of the bells in the vicinity—a noiseless bustle pervaded the mansion—carriages began to arrive

from all the fashionable quarters of the town, as empty as the grief of their owners for the deceased; and Mr. Fleming felt gratified, as he witnessed from his drawing-room window the long line of coronetted vehicles which were in waiting to fill up the procession that was to convey his highly connected consort to the tomb; for even in this solemn moment the ruling passion of his heart was paramount.

At eleven o'clock the hearse with its six black steeds and nodding plumes, all blazoned with the family escutcheons, drew up at the door which had lately echoed to the thundering knock of the visitants to her who was now borne away from it forever

On their arrival at the church, the pall was borne by four people of rank. Mr. Fleming walked as chief mourner; the funeral service was performed by a bishop; and nothing that could render the form impressive was omitted.

Chittenden had outdone himself; and Mr. Fleming was satisfied, and paid the bill of the funeral expenses, as the last honors paid to his wife's memory and his own pride.

Amidst the pomp and ceremony on this mournful occasion, there was one apart from the crowd, who groaned aloud during the ceremony, and who eagerly stretched forth his head to catch a last glimpse of the coffin as it descended by machinery into the vault. He was not an invited mourner; neither did he come with the common herd of spectators. From the moment the church doors were open, he had taken his place in a retired spot, and had been observed by the pow-openers in earnest and constant prayer till the arrival of the funeral procession, when he had joined the mourners unobserved, and stood at no great distance from the coffin during the ceremony.

The same stranger, by dint of a bribe to the sexton, obtained the sad privilege of spending nearly two hours during the subsequent night in the vault, where he was overheard to pray most earnestly, and to indulge in almost ungovernable grief.

A carriage and four waited for him at the gates of the church yard, which bore from England—from his prospects, his duties, and his home, the Baron Walmer; whose heart was the only one impressed with *feeling* during the glittering and mournful *forms* of the funeral pageantry.

CHAPTER X.

The boarding school of Mrs. Dashington was the most fashionable establishment in the metropolis, from which young ladies could derive those finishing touches in the education which the master artists give to their pictures before they send them to the exhibition. At this school Agnes had contracted a firm friendship for Lady Emily Trevor.

Lady Emily united prudence with feeling; and with a judgment more mature than her years, she attempted, and in some measure succeeded, in a regulation of her friends' more ardent temperament.

Lady Emily was the sister of Charles Trevor who had danced with Agnes on an evening which still remained most vividly impressed upon her remembrance; and her features bearing a slight resemblance to her brother's, recalled all the recollections of that evening, with their subsequent childish meetings on the sea shore, with sensations a little more allied to the feelings of the woman, than they were when those half stolen interviews were enjoyed at Brighton.

Lady Emily, too, wished nothing more than to make a sister of her friend, and lost no opportunity of speaking well of Charles, whom she loved with all the fondness of a sister's love; and who that has ever had a sister, does not know how strong that love is, and how often a sisterly affection renders a woman blind to a brother's failings?

This circumstance begot a confidence between these two young ladies, which led to a close intimacy. Agnes loved the Lady Emily for her kindness, her goodness of disposition, and perhaps for her likeness to her brother; but she thought her friend's mind a little too common-place—a little too given to tread in the beaten track which others had trod before, and too apt to regulate her feelings by her head, instead of permitting her actions and emotions to be dictated entirely by her heart.

Lady Emily loved Agnes for the generosity of her disposition. She loved her even for her romance, though she saw its dangerous tendency; and she admired the vigor of her intellect, and the richness of her imagination. But she did the utmost in her power to curb those ebulitions of her feelings which were ever bursting out into violent emotions of indignation at oppression, or of unqualified admiration at efforts of intellect or generosity.

She saw all the sterling good qualities of her heart, the almost stern uprightness of her mind, in spite of all the softness engendered by her course of reading, and in spite of all the excuses which her generous kindness could find for the dereliction of others.

She felt that such a woman would make an invaluable wife for her darling brother, and trusted that such qualities would fix for ever the wavering mind of Charles Trevor. Agnes' own recollection of her former intercourse, her romantic ideas of first love, and early impressions, rendered her secretly almost as anxious for this event as her friend; and the image of Trevor, thus kept alive in her mind, no wonder that, when time and chance threw him in her way, her heart was just in the state to deceive itself, and to receive the impression which the ardent impetuosity of a young man's passion was calculated to inspire.

During this period Trevor was abroad; and though he was not a very constant correspondent, yet, as the few letters that Lady Emily received from him gave lively descriptions of the places he had passed through, and were plentifully chequered with "blue skies of Italy," the "banks of the Arno," and the "sublime of the Alps and the Appenines," they impressed them both with the idea that he was a man of taste and feeling; and those descriptions were well calculated to keep alive the romance which had been already woven in the imagination of Agnes.

CHAPTER XI.

By this time we little doubt but many of our readers are turning over every chapter in "double quick time," as the military say, hoping to find out the *Roué*. It is, however, the province of the skilful dramatist to keep back its principal character till the second, and sometimes the third act; nay, in some instances, we have known him introduced only just in time for the denouement, and indeed that is the principal part of the work, whether novel or play, in which he is necessary.

The subordinate characters may keep up, prolong, and perhaps attenuate the interest, which the hero arrives in time to complete. Besides, there is, perhaps, some art in thus keeping back the character whose life we profess to write.—Mystery, we all know, excites an interest, which its removal frequently destroys. The interest of Mokanna is kept alive only so long as his veil is unlifted: the revelation of his countenance makes him a common hero; and a common hero, at least a modern hero, is a mere nobody—a mere coat and breeches part, as it is phrased in the technicals of the green-room. There is likewise a difficulty in our hero which is uncommon—the difficulty of creating a *Roué* bad enough to make him interesting, without rendering him so bad as to frustrate such an intention; though this difficulty is in the present instance somewhat obviated by our hero's having made himself to our hands; and we send the personage to the world, just as nature, education, and habit have formed him. Perhaps we ought not to enumerate nature as having any hand in the formation of his character.

Our only duty is to give him a fair chance in his debut. Denied the flourish of trumpets which precedes and gives dignity to the entrance of a dramatic hero; or the privilege of making him sing a song behind the scenes, to create a favorable impression in favor of his voice, and music in the audience; the novel is reduced to the necessity of a mere verbal description.

Had he been a veritable Don Juan, we might heve given him the advantage of a trap-door, and a handful of flames. But as he is neither more nor less than one of those wild spirits who are to be found every where spending a princely fortune, and mispending time, with considerable talents in the pursuit of any pleasure that presents itself, travelling out of the beaten track in quest of new sensations, and rushing into every thing that gave

Hope of a pleasure, or peril of a grave:

why we must content ourselves with the introduction which one of his own mad acts gave him to the notice of society. An act which was conveyed to the public through the following mysterious paragraphs through the morning and evening papers,—paragraphs which about this period excited a great deal of surprise and scandal in the fashionable world; and a great deal of speculation in that portion of the world which could not claim this enviable distinction:

PARAGRAPH I.

"The circles of haut-ton are much occupied just now with a discovery which implicates a young and lovely countess with a certain notorious, dashing, and elegant baronet."

PARAGRAPH II.

"The parties alluded to in our columns of yesterday, are supposed to be the young and lovely Countess of M——— and Sir R——— L———e. The lady was married only three years since to her present lord, who is the head of one of the most ancient families in the kingdom. The gallant Baronet has distinguished himself as much in the field of Mars as in the bowers of Venus; and it is whispered that this is the third time that he has given some hopes of a profitable cause to the gentlemen of the long-robe."

PARAGRAPH III.

"*Faux pas in fashionable life.*—The names of the frail fair one and of her gallant paramour are in every body's mouth in certain circles; but until the publicity of the law shall make them known, our readers must pardon us for a concealment which delicacy renders necessary. It is said that the estrangement of the lady from her husband for the last few months had given rise to jealousy, whose vigilance was at length rewarded, if a husband can call it reward, with the full conviction that it was well founded. The lady, conscious of this, contrived to escape through the garden of the family-mansion in —— Square, where she was met by the gallant Baronet and a faithful friend, and conveyed to a place of concealment and security. There are various opinions afloat upon this interesting topic in the fashionable world. Some blame the nobleman for marrying a lady so much younger than himself. Others think he paved the way to his own dishonour by the admission of such a fascinating and notorious gallant to such close and continued intimacy. As to the frail heroine of the adventure, she is blamed, and pitied according to the feelings and characters of those engaged in the disquisition."

PARAGRAPH IV.

"*Further particulars.*—Many of the circumstances connected with the late *faux pas* are of such a nature, as to throw a particular interest over the whole affair. The youth and beauty of the guilty pair—the violence of their passion—the contrivance of their stolen pleasures—their hair-breadth escapes—their moonlight interviews—together with the sworn gallantry and acknowledged bravery of the gay Lothario, have given to the whole affair a tincture of romance, which has rendered it the most interesting occurrence of the kind that has happened for half a century.

"It is said that certain gentlemen of the long-robe are already retained; that Mr. B. has, in conversation, expressed some portion of the bitter sarcasm for which he is famed, and with which he hopes to induce the jury to mitigate the damages· while Mr. C. P—— is dressing up a most affecting account of the domestic felicity which has been violated by the spoiler, and of the virtue that has become the prey of the destroyer."

These were the paragraphs that drew every female eye to that corner of the paper set apart for intelligences of this nature: and greedily were they read and commented upon by the young ladies of

Mrs. Dashington's establishment: who felt a peculiar interest in all they understood of the affair, from the circumstance of the "fallen fair one" having been a pupil of their "University;" and one of those whose rank and influence were the pride and glory of Mrs. Dashington.

That lady lifted up her hands and eyes with astonishment at this lapse of prudence, as she called it, in a pupil of hers; and wondered that only a three years intercourse with the world should have produced such a change in her mind and morals as to have occasioned such a dereliction from duty and propriety—as to be found out. A few days afterwards, the following *historiette* gave additional interest to the affair:

PARAGRAPH V.

Duel in high life.—A meeting took place yesterday morning, in the neighborhood of Hounslow, between Sir R—— L——e, the hero of the late *crim. con.* affair, and the gallant and honorable Colonel F——, the brother of the Lady: the former was attended by the honorable F—— V——, and the gallant Colonel by a brother officer. The parties arrived on the ground about seven in the morning in two hired chaises, which were stationed in a by-lane leading to Cranford; it being an affair in which the interference of seconds could be of no avail, none was attempted. The Colonel saluted his antagonist when they met, with that *froide politesse* which distinguishes the salutation of a determined enemy: the gay Lothario returned it with a bow and a smile, and with a look of nonchalance and bravery that would have graced a better cause. The ground was measured—and the pistols loaded by the seconds in solemn silence. Each second then brought his principal to his station: when Sir R—— L—— observing that his antagonist was placed in a direct line between himself and an oak tree, by which he was made a much more conspicuous mark, immediately pointed out the circumstance to the Colonel's second, who perceiving his error, and the advantage it gave the Baronet, immediately made a different arrangement, expressing his thanks for the hint.

"At the signal given for firing, the gallant Colonel's pistol was discharged to the instant; and so well had it been directed, that the ball passed through the tie of his adversary's neckcloth, who, to the surprise of all parties, had not even raised his pistol from his side.

"Turning immediately to his second, Sir R—— L—— desired him to ascertain if the Colonel was satisfied. Being answered in the negative, and requested to take his fire, the Baronet himself again put the question; and on again receiving a negative he deliberately turned round, and firing in an opposite direction at a tree nearly three times the distance from him that the Colonel was, lodged his ball directly in the centre of the trunk: then resuming his position, he signified to his friend that he was ready to take the second shot, as, by his not firing in the air, no termination had been put to the contest. The seconds here declared it impossible to proceed under such circumstances, and that the Colonel had done sufficient to satisfy his honor—in which he was compelled reluctantly to agree; and the parties returned to town.

"We understand that the moment the affair was settled, the gallant Baronet took off his neckcloth, and showed his friend and the surgeon who had attended near the ground, that the ball had actually grazed his throat, and that his shirt-collar was nearly saturated with blood."

This account was given as an authorized history of the affair in all the morning papers, and it was astonishing how the gallant bearing and generosity, as it was termed, of Sir R—— L——, turned the tide of public conversation and opinion in favor of the seducer.

Bravery and generosity are qualities which make more way with women, than perseverance and virtue; or even than what is called honor, where it is not emblazoned with these accompaniments. His conduct on this occasion, conferred on the hero of the adventure a character that gave him a dangerous interest in the eyes of the young and inexperienced; and his fault was forgotten in the minds of many, in the contemplation of the romantic manner in which it had been perpetrated, and the dashing and daring gallantry with which its consequences had been braved.

A few, but those were not among the young, the thoughtless, and the gay, looked upon the nonchalance with which he had conducted himself in the field, only as an aggravation of his error; and considered him as standing there ready to rush into the presence of his Maker, in the very act of defending the violation of one of his most sacred commandments.

As usual, upon such occasions, in this very just world of ours, the lips of censure were much more opened against the offending female than against her seducer. By her own sex in particular, she was treated most unsparingly; nothing was remembered of her but her frailty; and they all vituperated her dereliction from virtue, without mentioning one alleviating circumstance in her favor. In recapitulating her crime, they forgot that its foundation was laid in the sacrifice which had been made of her youth and beauty at the shrine of interest and ambition: they forgot that her husband was three times her age, and, if the world spoke truth, with vices equal to his years; and they found no apology for her, in the remembrance that her seducer was a practised corrupter of the sex—devoting the whole powers of a well-educated mind, a peculiarly graceful person, and a well-earned character for bravery, to that pursuit which had attainned for him the title of *l'homme a bonnes fortunes*, which being translated, means simply, "a sucessful scoundrel." But the French have very pretty terms and phrases for all sorts of crimes.

There had, however, been some circumstances connected with this *bonne fortune* of our hero's, which rendered it rather a more flagrant breach of trust, and a greater violation of hospitality and of friendship, than ever our latitudinarian world of fashion could patronise; and for a wonder, thoughts were really entertained of excluding the gentleman as well as the lady from society, at least for a time. This idea was much patronised by the many of his own sex, who envied him for the superiority of his mind and person, and for the sway which he had long held in the high circles in which he moved; for he had long been the "glass of fashion in which every one dressed himself;" and long

given laws to the forms of hats, the cut of pantaloons, and the ties of cravats; a distinction which, to do him justice, he only enjoyed as it enabled him to make fools of the many, while, with his select few, he laughed at their folly. Well would it have been for some of his coterie, had these been the only things in which they had imitated him.

Circumstances, however, soon rendered the adoption of this measure of exclusion unnecessary, as he withdrew himself to the continent, till the affair should be blown over; an event which was announced in the Kentish Chronicle, dated Dover: and, till his reappearance upon the tapis of our history, where he is not at present necessary, we must be contented with these slight notices of the movements of our intended hero; for such is Sir R——— L———.

PARAGRAPH VI.

"On Thursday morning last, the gallant Baronet, who has lately made himself so conspicuous in the *beau monde*, by his elopement with a certain celebrated Countess, arrived here in company with his frail companion, and the friend who was his second in the field. A private packet was immediately hired, in which the whole party set sail for the continent, where it is rumored that they intend to travel for some few months, until the legal and other processes consequent on the elopement are arranged."

This was the last paragraph upon an affair which proved one of the nine days' wonders of the fashionable world at that period.

But it was rather a curious sight to see the eight or ten young ladies of Mrs. Dashington's establishment eagerly waiting for the morning papapers, and still more eagerly prying into them for all the information which was to be obtained upon this subject. It was curious too, to hear their disquisitions and opinions upon these paragraphs; and it would have been still more so to have known all their thoughts, and wishes, and feelings, to which their perusal and contemplation of this adventure had given rise.

Such details of such a circumstance were curious subjects for the study and contemplation of young and inexperienced female minds, just entering into life; and yet we are compelled to admit, that the newspapers which contained them were much more sought after, and read in the "finishing school," for the first four days after this affair, than any of the books which usually occupied their reading hours

Amelia read it as a matter of course; she uttered the word "Shocking," cast up her eyes, and there was an end of the matter.

Agnes, one year younger in years, but five years older than her sister in feeling, read the accounts, and listened to all the observations to which they had given rise, with a mixed feeling of pity and horror, which she could not however entirely divest of something like admiration at the intrepidity of the hero of the tale; in which a youthful mind is too apt to find excuses for derelictions of this nature.

CHAPTER XII.

For some two or three years the sisters continued at Mrs. Dashington's school, both becoming still more confirmed in all those habits of mind which had characterised their infancy—the one conforming to all the ceremonies of her education, and thus becoming gradually a creature of mere form; the other, drinking with avidity from all the streams of literature and poetry, which the miscellaneous and itinerate library of Mrs. Dashington's drawing room provided, and by these means feeding rather than restraining and regulating the high and independent passions of her nature; but with all these warm and impetuous feelings of the heart were mingled a nobleness of spirit and a generosity of mind, which rendered her admired and beloved by every body. Her heart was perpetually in her hand and on her lips; what the one dictated, was the impulse to the actions and words of the other. Her allowance was entirely expended in indiscrimi nate charity, so that her wardrobe suffered dreadfully from this use, or misuse, as Mrs. Dashington called it, of her ample means. In short, all her actions were the result of impulse; the sight of misery was enough to draw a tear from her eye, and relief from her purse. She stopped not to inquire if the misery was real; it was apparent, and that was sufficient.

She drew all her knowledge of life from poetry, and creating an existence of her own, believed it to be the one through which she was to pass—but in spite of all this strong feeling, in spite of all her indiscriminate reading, there was a steady perseverance in right in every thing she did; and though she often acted without judgment, it was never without principle. But here was a being to be turned upon the great theatre of life. Here was a heart to go out among the heartless; and here were feelings and affections to become perhaps the prey of the male coquette, to be blighted by ingratitude, and to be chilled by the deceit which one meets with at every turning in the crooked paths of our existence.

Into this world, however, it was now decreed that she was to enter; due notices were given to Mrs. Dashington of the departures of the Misses Fleming; and Lady Emily Trevor was to quit at the same time.

As nothing could be done without a presentation at court, at least in Lady Pomeroy's ideas, this was the first thing thought of; and to her entire satisfaction, notices were just now issued from the chamberlain's office, of an approaching drawing room.

Her first presentation is an epoch of great importance in the life of a young lady. It gives her the first privilege of a woman, that of entering into dissipation. It is the signal that she is "out," and therefore ranked among those who are, for the future, open to receive cards for balls and proposals of marriage.

A drawing room, had, of late years, been scarce; it was no surprise that the present one had been waited for with impatience, and looked forward to with anxiety.

For some weeks all the milliners and dressmakers, from Conduit street to South Audley

street, had been in full occupation. The needle of the poor dear little seamstresses, who slave away their youth and beauty in these nunneries of needle-work, had been plied early and late, with no other reward than the contemplation of the finery which was growing into shape under their ingenious fingers; the plumassiers dressed up their feathers with all the pride of peacocks—mammas, governesses, chaperons, young ladies and ladies' maids, were in a bustle from morning till night; the milliners' doors were besieged; every body thought to be first served, and every body thought themselves neglected.

It would be an endless task to describe the agonies which a crooked flounce, or an ill-adjusted gusset—a too narrow skirt, or too stiff a train—produced; and then the dread that the dress might be sent home too late, and not allow sufficient time to put it on with effect, kept many a bright eye sleepless till the morning dawned.

At length, however, the eve of the important day arrived. The carriage drove up to Buckingham House; and two tall footmen were in a moment at the door of the carriage—down went the steps—and out marched Lady Pomeroy to head her little procession.

Lady Pomeroy and her nieces had scarcely entered the first room, and were looking about for some acquaintance, when hurrying back from the commencement of the crowd, came Charles Trevor.

Agnes' eyes sparkled, and her cheeks became suffused at the sight of him; she thought him on the continent. It was upwards of three years since they had met, and their looks testified, that three years had brought with it personal improvement to both of them.

"Miss Fleming!" exclaimed he, "I am delighted. What! going to be presented? Pray let me have the pleasure of writing your cards. Lady Pomeroy, I presume? Pray, Ma'am, let old grudges be forgotten, and condescend to let a Trevor be your cavalier through this crowd, which is really almost impenetrable; and if I may judge by my sides, none of the politest in the use of their elbows."

"Mr. Trevor," exclaimed Lady Pomeroy, coldly. Agnes looked at her beseechingly; Amelia's face never changed its expression.

"Yes, Ma'am, the same—the same, whom you knew as a boy at Brighton—when I had the honor to dance with Miss Fleming."

"Miss *Agnes* Fleming, if you please, sir—I remember. But surely you must have a very tenacious memory!" Just then, luckily for Trevor, Mrs. Dashington's school, and Agnes, there came such an influx of company, literally rushing past them, that if it had not been for Trevor's protecting arm, Lady Pomeroy would have been absolutely hurried into the crowd that was making its way towards the presence, without either her cards or her nieces.

Trevor took advantage of this—seized the pen and the cards, and wrote, "Miss Fleming, presented by Lady Pomeroy," "Miss Agnes Fleming, presented by Lady Pomeroy." Duplicates of these were quickly made and thrown upon the table; each young lady took the one designed for her. Trevor, in spite of a slight resistance, drew one of Lady Pomeroy's arms within his, while the other held her train, and they took their places at the back of the crowd.

A number of young men who were loitering that they might lose no part of the scene of confusion, for such is every part of the palace on a drawing-room day, excepting the presence chamber and those immediately adjoining, called out after Trevor, but he heeded them not.

They were now fairly in the crowd; new comers had closed them in, and were pushing from behind, which the struggles of those before to take off their dresses, and to steer clear of the swords and of the wigs of dignitaries of the church and the law, which were here and there seen like cauliflowers in the crowd, made a mob at Buckingham House very similar to a mob any where else.

These struggles were still more vehement at the approach to any of the doorways, to the narrow spaces of which the people who had occupied a whole room, were obliged to contract themselves to gain a passage to another.

Here Trevor's arm was of great use, and Lady Pomeroy ceased to regret that she had been obliged to him, when she felt the conveniences of passage which his strength and attentions obtained for her and her *protegées* at these perilous passages; for very perilous they were to flounces, feathers, and festoons.

The ladies having passed through the ceremony of presentation, and recovered from the pressure of the crowd, had leisure for all the "How d'ye dos," of recognition; and to laugh "at the dangers they had passed." Trevor still continued with Lady Pomeroy, in spite of the grave looks and assurances that she was "quite ashamed to trouble him any more." He was too much accustomed, however, to slight any hints that were not exceeding broad ones, to be put off easily; so he went rattling on about his tour, and what he had seen abroad, and drew a comparison between the Spanish, French, and English courts: and, in short, rendered himself entertaining, till "Lady Pomeroy's carriage stops the way," hurried them down into the hall, and through the corridor, lest it should be sent on by the police before they could reach the door, in which case Lady Pomeroy, by sad experience, knew that they might have to walk a quarter of a mile to get to it, or be detained for hours till it should again come round in rotation It was at such times as these that she envied those who had the *entrée*, a privilege which no riches could procure her.

Trevor saw them to their carriage, saying every thing he could to procure even a distant invitation from Lady Pomeroy; but all in vain. It was useless hinting where hints were not intended to be taken. Trevor was therefore at last obliged in saying "Adieu," to add, "that of course he should feel it his duty to call in Grosvenor Square, to inquire after them."

A cold bow from Lady Pomeroy was immediately followed by drawing up the glass. "Drive on, coachman," exclaimed the policeman—away flew the horses—and home went the heroines to undress, and lay aside all their drawing-room paraphernalia, except their tiaras and feathers, which were to be again exhibited in Lady Pomeroy's box at the opera.

The tiaras and feathers, however, were not their

only accompaniments in the opera box: For Trevor took his place beside them, and in spite of the cold looks of Lady Pomeroy, kept his station through the whole of the opera and ballet; elbowed his way with them along the lobby into the concert room, called their carriage, and in fact did every thing in the world to be civil to and amuse Lady Pomeroy, who, on their way home, could not help expressing that they were really very much obliged to Mr. Trevor; to which she added, "And it is a pity he is a younger brother."

CHAPTER XIII.

There are few events in our short passage through life that are more contemplated by persons of both sexes, or anticipated with greater eagerness, or which produce more bitter or sweeter results, than marriage. Marriage, the end of love; and alas! in how many instances is this end attained?

Love is the subject of the poet—Marriage of the philosopher; the one creates a thousand imaginary blisses, which it is the province of the other to destroy; and yet with thousands of examples before our eyes of the variety of miseries which this connexion produces, unless all the judgment as well as the affections of our nature is exerted in its formation, how many do we see daily and hourly making the desperate plunge, without exerting the foresight of Æsop's frog, of looking into the well before taking the leap. But even Æsop's frog might get out of the well again. But in matrimony, it is *vestigia nulla retrorsum*, and therefore both sexes should look well into the matter before they embark in it, and ascertain what are the real causes which induce them to commit matrimony.

Men should ascertain whether they stand most in need of a wife, an heiress, or a nurse; and whether it is their passions, their wants, or their infirmities, that induce them to wed: and women should ask themselves whether it is a husband, an establishment, or rank, that makes them trust their guardianship to a man. In short, both should know, according to the epigram, whether they are candidates for the state, *propter opus, opes*, or *opem*.

Would people put these questions to themselves before they go to the altar, instead of after it, when they thrust themselves into the mind perforce, and will be answered, I am inclined to think there would not be so many miserable families, nor so much business for Doctors' Commons. A timely understanding of the motives that lead to the altar, would prevent many heart-breaking disappointments, which are often deplorable, often ridiculous, and always remediless. In Mr. Fleming's family, there were almost as many different opinions upon the subject of marriage as there were persons. His own ideas were entirely confined to his own ambitious projects: as he had himself married entirely for the purpose of connecting himself with people of rank, all his wishes with regard to his daughters had the same end in view. Lady Pomeroy's inclinations were much of the same nature, only that she wished to be the match-maker, and had no idea of either of her nieces choosing for themselves. Henry Pomeroy being the only male relation of Mr. Fleming, and the only son of his sister, he was destined to be the medium through which the ambitious schemes which they had jointly formed, were to be accomplished; for Mr. Fleming wished a branch of his own family to be ennobled, and he had therefore determined upon a marriage between young Pomeroy and Amelia, in the hope that the influence of the Dornton family, united to the power of his own wealth, would procure a baronetcy for him on his taking the name of Fleming.

Amelia's destiny was therefore fixed, as far as the determination of her father and aunt were concerned; and she was precisely the character to render a compliance with their wishes easy. But Agnes had very different ideas: she had thought for herself—and what was more, had felt for herself; and all these thoughts and feelings had been buoyed up by the nature of her reading.

She had a kind of romantic feeling of the duration of first impressions, and fell into that very common error, that first love is always the strongest and the purest: that it may be the purest, is much more likely than that it is the strongest; since at the period of life that it is generally experienced, our passions are purer because they have not attained their maturity; as infancy is always more innocent than manhood. But that first love is or can be the strongest, if felt in early youth, I much doubt, for the heart has not yet learned the strength of its own feelings. Passion, like every thing else, must grow more powerful by experience, and must be stronger in the full maturity of life than at its commencement.

Agnes, however, could not think so—she was young—she had been pleased—and she thought she loved; and it was agreeably to all her received and cheering notions, that the object of this love should be the youth that she had first distinguished. Perhaps, too, her love for Lady Emily had encouraged this feeling in no small degree; and Trevor, being a remarkably fine young man, with showy talent and a great flow of animal spirits, a closer acquaintance was not likely to change those feelings in his favor. There was another thing that also worked powerful for him in her mind, and this was Lady Pomeroy's prejudice against him. Her independent mind naturally revolted against any thing that in the slightest degree savoured of injustice, and her heart always espoused the cause of those whom she considered its victims. Agnes had only seen Trevor in those moments when he had appeared amiable—she recollected with gratitude and pleasure the attentions which he had paid her when a boy—and when he came to her as a fine young man, with a soldier's laurels round his brows, and came too, as the brother of her dearest friend, it was no wonder that gratitude and pleasure should increase to something warmer; and this being the first sensation of the kind, no wonder she gave to it the character of that all-engrossing passion which she had so often pictured in her imagination. Trevor, too, was a passionate and persevering lover: Lady Pomeroy's opposition had acted upon his mind precisely in the same manner in which it had stimulated Agnes, and had made him determine to succeed.

Agnes had thus known him as a boy, and knew

him as a man; but she had not known him between these epochs. She had heard indeed of his galant conduct in the field; she knew his progress from cornet to lieutenant from lieutenant to captain, and from captain to major; and all this told well for him. But she knew nothing of the progress of his mind and heart during this period; she knew nothing of the development of his character; she knew how he had lived publicly, but she was utterly ignorant of his private conduct. She knew the direction-posts and milestones that marked in his career; but she was utterly ignorant of the scenery between them.—She recollected him an engaging boy—she had heard of him as a gallant soldier, and she received him as a passionate lover, and the brother of that friend whom she considered that it would be happiness to call sister; and with all these reflections she gave herself up to the delicious dream of first love, and imagined for Trevor the perfections which he certainly did not posses. And what girl of her age has not done the same?

The determined friendship of Agnes for Lady Emily, and the dislike Mr. Fleming had to offend any person of family, had made her nearly a constant visiter in his house in spite of Lady Pomeroy; and thus Trevor as her brother, naturally also found a footing, though the old lady kept a very watchful eye upon his conduct; for she was determined that the immense fortunes which both her nieces would have, should never go to support a younger brother, and particularly the cadet of a family, the head of which had formerly offended her pride.

CHAPTER XIV.

Trevor, with no decided propensity to any particular vice, was completely led by those with whom he lived. "Infirm of purpose," with a great dread of ridicule, mixed with a strong passion for pleasure, he was a complete *girouette*, subject to the variation of every passing wind.

At Eton and at Oxford he had imitated the follies of others. He went to the Peninsula, because every young man of rank had done the same thing. He travelled, after the peace, because he found some of his old comrades had determined on making the tour of Europe; and he indulged in all the vices of all the capitals he passed through, first, to imitate the set with which he lived; and secondly, to escape the ridicule with which any qualm of conscience would inevitably have been visited.

In some of the places where he had stopped in Italy, he made the acquaintance of the Honorable Baronet who had cut such a conspicuous figure in the elopement; the history of which was given in Chapter XI.; and, like every one else who had ever been fascinated into his society, Trevor could not resist its influence, and had been the participator in a number of intrigues, in Rome, Florence, and Naples; until his separation from such a dangerous companion, and a command from his relations at home, had withdrawn him from the dissipation of the continent, and compelled his return to England.

During this period, he had been a partner, or more properly, a follower, in many of the wild adventures of our hero; and had been present at, and the witness of, a bet which had been made by him, that within a year he would enter again into London society, and be as well received as ever. He had not, however, yet attempted the decision of this wager.

The sight of Agnes (though it did not recall the feelings of his boyish days, for those had long since become extinct, and were nearly forgotten) inspired Trevor with a new passion, which he was fain to persuade himself and her was the continuance of his early love; and he thus presented himself to one who was already prepossessed in his favor, with the additional recommendation of a constancy which, in modern days, both Agnes and her friend Lady Emily decided to be astonishing.

Ignorant how the intervening years had been spent by him, they were neither of them aware of the dangerous tendencies of his character; and though Lady Emily knew something of the vacillation which proved so conspicuous an element of its composition, she thought that the beauty and virtues of her friend would be the best remedy for this defect.

Agnes was indeed all that man could desire in woman; with a person formed in nature's finest mould; a temper in which sweetness was blended with dignity; and a heart open as the day, with eyes and lips that wept at woe or laughed at merriment. Agnes presented a specimen of the sex, which the proudest man might be proud to have called his own.

Trevor saw and was completely conquered; and with the usual vascilation of his character, every dissipation was immediately given up; he thought himself for about the fiftieth time inspired by a passion which was to last for ever; and so he swore it would, both to Agnes herself and to his sister, whom he found a very useful ally in his pursuit.

The habit of thinking of him, the recolleetions of their early intercourse, a prejudiced idea of the strength and never ending influence of a first love, were all favorable things for Trevor in the mind and head of Agnes; and unfortunately, the Argus eyes of Lady Pomeroy prevented her from forming any other estimate of Trevor's character, than such as she could obtain from short and hurried interviews in mixed society—in assemblies—or at the Opera; and in them he was well calculated to shine, as he had a great gift of small-talk; had read much poetry; could descant plausibly on various subjects; and had, undoubtedly, seen a great deal of the world. Added to this, he was really passionately in love; and love, we all know, will turn dullness into eloquence, to the ear and heart that are prepossessed in favor of the speaker.

Had Lady Pomeroy permitted that unrestrained intercourse between Agnes and Trevor which his sister's intimacy with her might have sanctioned, it is very probable that her penetration might have developed his real character, and thus the danger Lady Pomeroy dreaded, had been avoided; or perhaps the passion of Trevor himself, unfed by opposition, might, with the usual volatility of his character, have gradually subsided, or given place to some new feeling for some other beauty.

While however they met each other so seldom,

she never saw him but with his mind and heart in their holiday dress; and never hearing of him except through the medium of his partial sister, she became acquainted only with the favorable parts of his character.

Besides, Trevor knew well how to express his passion; he could talk of love, and feeling, and sentiment: could picture domestic happiness; descant on the intercourse of souls; and converse on all the secret sympathies of the human heart. In short, he was well versed in all the hacknied language of passion, which never appears nonsencical, even to the most penetrating, when the heart is first giving way to the impression of love.

Trevor thus only presented an outline of his character to Agnes, which her vivid imagination unfortunately filled up with every trait she wished him to possess; and thus she became enamoured with the creature of her own imagination—with what she wished Trevor to be, rather than with what he actually was.

This feeling in such a heart as that of Agnes was rather increased than diminished, by the opposition which he met with from Lady Pomeroy and her father. His being a younger brother, and entirely dependent on the kindness of his relatives and his profession of arms for his income, gave him, in her eyes, an additional claim to her affection. Her generous spirit revolted from such groveling ideas: wealth and station never found an advocate in her bosom; and she annoyed both her father and Lady Pomeroy by the frequent disregard of all that they considered desirable in life—rank and etiquette.

Indeed, this was the principal, perhaps the only fault in her character; for conscious rectitude made her so completely regardless of mere punctilio and form, that she was too apt to display an independence of opinion in her remarks which is far from being a pleasing, and is always a very dangerous trait in the character of a young woman.

It was in vain that coronet after coronet was laid at her feet, either by the declarations of their possessors themselves, or through the medium of Lady Pomeroy and her father. It was in vain that the advantages of rank, the extent of jointure, the splendor of establishments, were talked of. Agnes turned a deaf ear to every proposal. She pitied and was silent over the one or two instances of true love which she regretted to have inspired, because they could only create unhappiness; but she ridiculed and triumphed over the many who sought her only on account of the consols, India bonds, exchequer bills, and ready cash, which it was well known would be the portion of either of Mr. Fleming's lovely daughters.

From the moment they came out, Amelia and Agnes had become the mark of all the manœuvring mammas who had sons to marry; and to all the young and dissolute noblemen, who wished for Mr. Fleming's gold to repair the depredations which profligacy and extravagance had made in their estates.

Lady Pomeroy, however, having very early made known the destination of Amelia, Agnes became alone the object of these pursuits; and a very few months were sufficient to disgust her with the selfishness and the indelicacy with which they were prosecuted, as well as with the envy and rancor of those who would consider her as a rival, in spite of all that she could do to prove the contrary. Every refusal was attributed to pride and ambition, and to her wish for a husband of superior rank to any that had yet offered.

The effects created in Agnes' mind during these few months, served greatly to confirm her heart in its original sentiments. She saw too much of *her* world to respect its opinions, and every day added some argument in favor of her own predilection for feeling in preference to form, and continued her in that independence of mind which had so early been one of her principal characteristics.

Wherever talent or genius of any kind existed, no matter the rank or the station of its possessor, it was sure to find a patroness in Agnes; and many were the severe lessons she received from her aunt and father for giving her attention to some poor poet or player, whose talent had made him a path into society; while lordlings were, by dozens, waiting for the smiles which she so lavishingly bestowed on the efforts of genius.

In the meantime, her feelings in favor of Trevor gained a more decided ground as she perceived the evident injustice done him by Lady Pomeroy. Trevor himself felt this, and it only increased his determination to succeed; for he was a very obstinate man sometimes, and to tell him he should not do a thing, was very frequently only giving him an additional incitement to its accomplishment. He likewise enjoyed the evident and sometimes ludicrous distress his presence occasioned the old lady, and very naturally felt vain of the decided preference which Agnes gave him over all her other admirers.

It was with Lady Emily, however, only, that Agnes conversed on this subject; and they both quite agreed, that though she had a right to refuse to listen to any other proposals, it was clear that she ought not to act in opposition to her father's wishes on a point so important. As to the wishes of Lady Pomeroy, as Agnes perfectly well knew why they were indulged, she honestly confessed that they had no weight with her; to the old lady's great annoyance, therefore, wherever they appeared, Trevor was sure to appear also. At Howell and James', he was sure to be loitering down the street just at the moment to put them into their carriage. In the Park, his horse could never get beyond the side of their barouche. At dinner, in spite of all Lady Pomeroy's manœuvres, she was sure to see Trevor seated between his sister and Agnes. At the opera, she might as well have attempted to have removed the pillars of Hercules from their station, as have frowned or hinted Trevor out of her box; for nothing less than main force could have ejected him from the position which he took up every Tuesday and Saturday night of the season, behind the cane-bottomed chair of Agnes. At quadrille parties, if Lady Pomeroy left her *ecarte* table for a moment, she was sure to see Trevor *pas de basque*-ing, or *dos-a-dos*-ing with Agnes. In short, go where she would, he was still there; and in the very places where she had calculated he could gain no admittance, the first face she was sure to see was the eternally smiling one of Charles Trevor.

Public report, with busy tongue, soon set down a match between Trevor and Agnes as a determined thing, in spite of all the assertions to the

contrary made everywhere by Lady Pomeroy: who, indeed, made it one great business of her life to contradict this surmise, and to proclaim that her niece's hand was still disengaged; and that she was free to receive any proposals of marriage from any person of a certain rank and fortune.

In the meantime, the other personages of our drama were not idle.—Lady Emily's heart and affections were courted and earnestly sought after by the persevering attentions of Mr. Hartley; an esteem for his character was, unknown to herself, gradually ripening into a warmer feeling: so that there were many who knew them, who predicted that only a little time was requisite to transform Lady Emily Trevor into Lady Emily Hartley. But this she most pertinaciously denied when she was accused of it.

Hartley was one of those young men of fortune, of whom we have at present very few. He considered it to be a duty he owed to his tenants to reside a certain portion of the year on his estate, to redress their grievances, and look after their affairs himself, instead of leaving their fate in the hands of some mercenary agent.

The consequence was, that his tenants were happy, never over-rented, and loved their landlord. His oaks and elms still flourished in his forests, and still decorated his park; for no London dissipation and extravagance had condemned them to the axe. His income, though not so great in nominal amount, was more in reality than that of several whose rent-rolls showed double the sum that he did; because there was no rent fixed on farmers, which their produce did not enable them to pay; and Hartley derived more pleasure from the smiling faces of his happy tenantry as he rode through his estate, than he could ever have received from the possession of a few more thousand pounds per annum, produced from their cares and labors.

In short, Hartley was a good specimen of an English country gentleman—not one of your roaring, drinking, fox-hunting squires, who live on their own estates, because they are out of their element, and unendurable every where else—but an ornament to the unpaid magistracy of the country—an independent representative of the county in which he was born, and which contained his property, and in every respect a man formed to be one of the pillars of the third estate in the constitution of England.

But with all this, Hartley had but little sentiment; and Agnes often rallied her friend in the possession of such a mere matter-of-fact lover. He, however, had a fund of good feeling in his heart, and though incapable of that frippery of affection which evaporates in display, he had all the elements of a wholesome and manly love in his composition, and the whole of those elements were engrossed by Lady Emily.

His was not a character to shine in the ordinary course of society; but there were qualities in it which gave a certain resource in all times of difficulty and trouble in the long perfection of existence. He was a man upon whom a woman might safely calculate to find an affectionate and constant protector; and a husband whose love would outlast the gratification of his passion. In short, Hartley was one of those sterling characters that make their way with sensible people; one who would be described as the best creature in the world by one part of it, and a most insufferable bore by the other.

He had made no impression upon Lady Emily at first; her mind and heart were too romantic in their ideas to conceive any thing like love at first sight for such a man as Mr. Hartley. But in her progress through society, when she compared the sterling qualities of his heart and the good sense of his conversation with the more shining, but more superficial accomplishments of others, her reason invariably decided the comparison in his favor in spite of herself.

She saw, too, the dangerous tendency of giving way to the warmth of feeling in the contemplation of the character of her friend; and in time found in the candor and honesty of Hartley, which never permitted any fault of hers to pass without a remark that was calculated to correct it, something more solid to admire and be pleased at, than at the flattery by which she was assailed by a host of more gay and fashionable adorers.

But this increasing influence of Hartley she still pettishly denied, and never acknowledged it even to herself. Her young imagination had dressed up a creature of its own conception as the man who was to rob her heart of its first love; and Hartley was not at all such a man as she had imagined.

"Besides," she would say, "what lover ever hoped to succeed by telling his mistress of her faults?—doubtless she had many," (and this was said with a becoming look of humility.) "But a lover ought to be blind to them at any rate. There were enough envious people who hated her in the world to point her defects, without a man who professed himself her admirer giving himself that trouble."

Hartley bore all the rebuffs she gave him with patience, because she never forbade the continuance of his suit; and he had too much tact to risk any decided refusal by any decided proposition. But yet he felt he was gaining ground, or at least flattered himself so; and he therefore still continued, contrary to his nature, to pursue her from opera to route, and from party to party; though there was not a place that did not teem with heart-aches for him, as he saw her ear engrossed by the witticisms of one, or the heroism of another, or of the flattery of a third. Dancing, too, was out of the question with him; and he was therefore condemned to watch her through all the movements of her quadrille, and to feel a twinge every time he saw her hand clasped in that of her partner. Lady Emily, however, almost unconsciously avoided as much as possible all occasions of giving him pangs of this nature.

A secret presentiment that, in spite of the opposition in their present tempers and pursuits, she would one day be his, induced him still to pursue a manner of life which he despised, that he might have his eye continually upon her; and though he never sacrificed his candor in her praise, he did not confine his observations merely to her faults; till Lady Emily at length began to relish praise from Hartley with a feeling of pleasure, at which she was herself surprised. As to her other admirers, they had no fear of Hartley. He was too

plain, too unpresuming a person to give them any idea of a dangerous rival; if the thought crossed their mind that he loved her, it was accompanied by a supercilious smile, and a mental comparison between him and themselves, which of course ended much in their own favor. They could never imagine that the country-gentleman, as he was called, could have any attractions for the gay and beautiful Lady Emily Trevor, and they laughed when her brother would sometimes state his opinion, that the tortoise would win the race at last.

For his own part, Hartley had in truth often repented the circumstance of his falling in love with a being apparently so dissimilar to himself, and lamented that he had not stifled his passion at its commencement; but it was now too late: Lady Emily had become necessary to his happiness, and he was determined to persevere while there was the slightest hopes of success.

Wherever, therefore, Lady Emily went, there also was Hartley watching her with the anxious eye of a guardian lover; sometimes endured, often scolded, but always attentive. He would designate himself her mentor—she called him her tormentor; but in spite of their numerous disagreements, their hearts were coming to a better understanding every day, and Lady Emily felt herself better and better pleased, and much more gratified by the honest, ardent attachment of the plain Mr. Hartley, than she did with the fulsome attentions and flatteries of a dozen others, who rank themselves among the finest young men about town.

At this period, one of Mr. Fleming's boroughs becoming vacant, Henry Pomeroy was recalled from the Continent, where he had been travelling since he had taken his degrees at Oxford, to fill the vacant seat, and to accomplish the project of his mother and uncle, by marrying Amelia.

His senses were captivated with the beauty of his cousin; and deeming the coldness of her disposition to arise from mere maiden bashfulness, he entered with avidity into the schemes of his mother, as far as it regarded his union with Amelia.

Not so, however, with respect to the political shemes for the aggrandisement of the family, projected by Mr. Fleming. As to the change of name from Pomeroy to Fleming, that was perfectly indifferent to him, but in all the points of political opinion, they were as far asunder in their ideas as the antipodes.

Young, ardent, and impetuous, Henry thought, acted, and spoke, upon the principal points of modern politics, with a freedom of discussion that astonished and alarmed Mr. Fleming, who had never thought at all, but blindly followed in the track pursued by whoever happened to be in power.

Catholic Emancipation—Parliamentary Reform—the Abolition of Slavery—the Reduction of Taxes—March of Intellect—were the themes upon which Henry Pomeroy indulged, in the full power of youthful eloquence; and Mr. Fleming trembled, lest the schemes of ambition which he had been so long pursuing, should be destroyed by the maiden speech of his nephew.

These schemes had gradually increased in their extent, as he had felt the accumulation of his influence, since his accession by purchase to two more boroughs; and dreading lest the impetuosity of Henry's temper might undo all that he had been so long doing, he called him into the library to detail the whole of his projects. In this conversation, no longer content with a baronetcy, he stated that he had not only hinted at his expectations of a peerage, with a remainder to his nephew, but that it had actually been promised him; and this, accompanied by such talents as Henry possessed, he foresaw might lead to the highest honors of the state.

Upon his favorite topic, even Mr. Fleming could be eloquent, and he portrayed to Henry all the splendors and advantages which awaited his adoption of the same political opinions with himself. Henry, however, was obstinate; he would submit to no compromise. If he accepted a seat in parliament, it must be with complete independence as to his "ayes and noes."

It was in vain that Mr. Fleming attempted to show the absurdity and folly of playing a game by which he could get nothing. Henry was obstinate, till his uncle, for the first time in his life, fell into a passion, dismissed him with violence, and determined to marry again, and have an heir of his own, to accomplish those darling schemes of ambition, which he had so long contemplated with delight, went to bed, and was found by his servant the next morning dead.

Such an unusual event as a fit of passion had thrown the blood into his head, and occasioned apoplexy; and thus ended all the ambitious schemes of Mr. Fleming.

CHAPTER XV.

The extreme coldness of Mr. Fleming's disposition, and his steady pursuit of his ambitious projects, by shutting up all the kindly feelings of his nature, had rendered him a person whose loss, either as a parent or friend, could not create any violent or lasting grief.

A very few months were sufficient to dry the tears and console the mourners for Mr. Fleming's loss; and this man, so important in his own estimation, and without whom he actually thought the machine of the world could scarcely move, became nearly, if not totally, forgotten.

The family began to think of renewing all the projects of alliance which his death had intercepted.

Trevor became again the same persevering persecutor of Lady Pomeroy that he had been before; but Lady Pomeroy had now more power, and determined to exert it.

Convinced that nothing could tend so much to the misery of Agnes as her marrying a younger brother, with such remote contingencies as Charles Trevor, she set her face decidedly against the match, and took upon herself to forbid his visits and attentions; and the more effectually to break off all intercourse between the young people, she also requested that Lady Emily would cease to be so constant an inmate of Grosvenor Square, and commanded Agnes to give up her friend.

Agnes, however, acknowledged no such authority as that which Lady Pomeroy seemed inclined to assume; and though she said nothing about Charles Trevor, she loudly protested she would not break off her intercourse with his sister—the friend of her childhood, the school-fellow of her heart.

Lady Pomeroy was too firmly convinced that while this *liaison* existed, there was no chance of the brother's being discarded, to give up her point; and she determined to carry it, by removing to Fleming Hall, where no mixed society and large parties afforded the facilities for meeting, which were of course to be found in the circles of London.

All her ladyship's attempts were, however, attended with precisely the contrary effects to those which she anticipated; for the greater her opposition, the more determined and pertinacious became Trevor to succeed, and the more Agnes thought she saw the injustice of her aunt.

To do Lady Pomeroy justice, she had latterly been rather more particular in her inquiries with respect to Trevor; and in the midst of her questions of how many removes he was from the family-title, and what expectations he had from his numerous connexions, she had heard tales of vacillation of principle and of dissipation, upon which she determined to ground her opposition to the match; and trusted to do so with more success, when it was his character and conduct she condemned, rather than his want of fortune.

The fact was, that during the very short cessation of his intercourse with Agnes that Mr. Fleming's death had necessarily occasioned, he had fallen in with some of his former associates, and had been shamed by their ridicule into many of his old pursuits.

Lady Emily had witnessed this with pain; and was rejoiced when Agnes, again mixing in society, recalled her brother from a path, the pursuit of which must have lost her to him for ever: for, after all, it was the apparent constancy of his attachment that had the greatest charm for Agnes.

Reports, however, of this temporary defalcation of Trevor having reached the ears of Lady Pomeroy, she was not long in making them additional argumetns against his encouragement by Agnes; but unfortunately the eagerness with which she used these arguments and repeated these rumors, defeated her own projects, and only tended to confirm Agnes in the idea she had formed of the unjust prejudices of her aunt.

To the same account, or to the score of envy, were also placed several hints of the same nature, which she received from various intimates in her circle. But as these were also intimates of Lady Pomeroy, she attributed all they said to her instigation.

One circumstance about this time made a deeper impression on her mind than all these reports; which was an anonymous intimation to the same effect, which she found one night on her dressing table. It was written in an old-fashioned handwriting, and ran tnus:—

"Proceed not hastily—listen to your friends. Trevor is not the man you suppose him to be. What his affection and your influence may effect, is still in the womb of time: but sacrifice not your happiness to an uncertainty. Your mind, disposition, temper, and pursuits, are dissimilar. He is vacillating and volatile, though ardent. If your heart be too far engaged to give him up entirely, at least take time: try his constancy by absence. It is the advice of one who knows him better than you can—of one to whom your happiness is dearer than his own."

No inquiry that Agnes could make enabled her even to guess at the writer of this epistle; to which in spite of her habitual contempt of anonymous information, she could not help giving more attention than she afterwards thought it deserved. The last sentence, however, admitting a misconstruction, and suggesting the idea, that it might be the production of a rival, it was soon classed among the many other futile attempts to set her against Trevor. The handwriting too was so remarkable that it appeared feigned; and the letter might therefore be the production of one of the many whom she knew her aunt employed to induce her to give up her lover.

At length, Lady Pomeroy's pursuits permitted her temporary migration from the scenes of gayety and London to the retirement of Fleming Hall; and thither she compelled Agnes, much against her will, to go, without her friend Lady Emily. Indeed, their party being merely a family one, they were accompanied only by Henry Pomeroy, whose nearly approaching marriage with Amelia rendered him her incessant attendant.

Luckily for Trevor, Lady Pomeroy, left Fleming Hall, and went away on a visit to a distant part of the country for a few days. She having been led to believe that Agnes had lately listened with a more favorable ear to her counsels, with regard to resigning all ideas of Trevor, and paying a more implicit obedience to the wishes of her aunt.

Lady Pomeroy's absence gave Agnes the leisure and opportunity of preparing for her approaching departure and nuptials, which were to take place without the knowledge of her aunt.

The banns were published, and the appointed morning arrived.

The maid of Agnes was to accompany her, and it was determined that Lady Emily's carriage should take them both up at the Park-gate. Agnes rejoiced in the absence of Lady Pomeroy only as it prevented any scene of altercation; every thing conspired to the wishes of the parties. Agnes arrived at Lady Trevor's at night, and in the morning, in the presence of nearly the whole of his family, she became the wife of Charles Trevor.

Lady Pomeroy's violent indignation on becoming acquainted with the fact of the marriage, soon subsided. For the very same post which brought a letter announcing the marriage of Agnes, also communicated to Lady Pomeroy that, in consequence of the death of an uncle, Trevor had become the proprietor of a rich inheritance.

This, together with the idea that he was but two removes from the earldom, and that one of his elder brothers was consumptive, and the other unmarried, completely softened Lady Pomeroy's indignation.

CHAPTER XVI.

It appears to us, that the old romance and novel writers (we do not allude to those of the days and style of the Ma'amselles Scuderys, but to those of five-and-twenty years since) were wrong in finishing the history of their heroine with her marriage.

Marriage is rather that era in which the most interesting part of a woman's memoirs begins, and at any rate is the commencement of a new existence.

New and delicious ties attach her to life—new prospects open to her view—new and sacred responsibilities arise around her to be fulfilled—she is entering into all the reality of that which she has hitherto been anticipating—and no longer a girl, she looks round the world and through society with an air which seems with proud consciousness to declare that—she is a woman.

Much is written—much thought—and much said on the dangers of young and inexperienced women in the world; but in modern and good society this risk is merely imaginary as far as it regards single women; no one presumes to address a whisper in the ear of a young unmarried woman, unless he has some remote ideas of matrimony. Seduction seldom or ever enters a man's head when there is the possiblity of his being compelled, either through cowardice or some other motive, to make a compensation by the sacrifice of his liberty. Should such an idea be engendered in the mind of any man, the moment he begins to act upon it, a multitude of mammas, aunts, and fathers, with brothers and cousins in the back ground, flock around him to demand his intentions. A young girl is therefore sure to be put upon her guard; and is secure, because her lover must make his approaches through a *chevaux-de-frise* of relations, and accompany every sigh and sonnet with a proposal and a setlement.

If such a circumstance as the seduction of an unmarried lady occurs in society, she is generally the victim of some married libertine, who has commenced his insidious attacks by exciting pity at the uncongeniality between himself and his wife; by teaching his victim this, through the medium of silent complaints, he first incites her to find an apology for his want of conjugal love; she then ceases to wonder that he has fixed his affections upon her, at last confers her own upon him.

Your unfettered libertine never pays an attention where its object may be mistaken; and he has in general such a horror of matrimony, that he strangles every passion in its birth, that may by any remote chance lead to such a result.

Marriage thus, in the modern state of society, lays a woman open to a thousand more scenes and temptations than her maidenhood can possibly present; and consequently, the greatest and most interesting portion of the history of her passions, her affections, occurs after the formation of this *liaison*.

As to Agnes, the forgiveness of Lady Pomeroy had removed the only cloud that appeared to darken her felicity. Blessed with the husband of her choice, and conceiving that husband to be all that her young imagination had pictured to her that a husband ought to be, felt herself the most blessed of human creatures; and with a heart so happy, that she scarcely knew how to contain it within any moderate bounds, she jumped into the carriage which was to convey them to Trevor Place, to which he had just succeeded, by the bequest which had arrived so opportunely to propitiate Lady Pomeroy.

The invitation to Fleming Hall had been thankfully declined; for when could two hearts in love, and in the full accomplishment of their wishes, think of the formulæ of settlements, or devote themselves to the dull drudgery of business.

Away, therefore, they went to Trevor Place, feeling themselves the whole world to each other, and that the eye or the presence of any third person would have, in some degree, marred their present felicity.

The weather was delightful; the sun shone, and the birds sang; all nature appeared in its holiday dress; but the sun had never shone so brightly—the birds had never sung so sweetly—the beauties of nature had never appeared so beautiful to the eyes of Agnes as they did now. Her life appeared like the clear sky before her, without a cloud to darken its brightness; all nature seemed to harmonise with the buoyant feelings of her own heart, and it would have been difficult, under her present sensations, to have convinced her that there was such a thing as misery in the world.

Their journey was a mixture of endearments and projects for the future; a thousand delightful plans were proposed and discussed; the improvement of their estate—the happiness of their tenantry—the morning ramble—the noontide ride—the social evening—the uninterrupted enjoyment of each other's society—were mingled with a hundred projects of doing good to their fellow-creatures—of increasing their own happiness by adding to that of others.

It was a beautiful evening towards the end of autumn, when they arrived on the summit of a high hill, which commanded a complete view of the country for many miles round; and among other well remembered objects, Trevor pointed out the hall of the ancestors of that branch of his family, to which he had thus suddenly become the heir. The chimneys of the mansion were only visible above the dark trees by which it was surrounded; a river gently glided through the domain, and swept its serpentine course quite through the country, sparkling in the last refulgent rays of the setting sun, which was now rapidly declining; glittering first on the windows of the farm houses and villas with which the country was studded, then upon the gilded vanes of several village churches that here and there reared their humble spires amid a cluster of thatched cottages; and lastly, throwing a parting gleam upon the summit of the hill on which Trevor had ordered the drivers to stop for a few minutes, that he and Agnes might enjoy the beauty of the scenery.

As they descended into the valley, their animated conversation gradually subsided into deep silence; a sensation of pleasing melancholy mingled with their happiness; their clasped hands alone spoke their affection; and perhaps this state of feeling is a degree of happiness far superior to the greatest buoyancy of pleasure that can be enjoyed. A thousand boyish recollections connected with the place

to which they were going were rapidly passing through Trevor's mind, as every tree, cottage, and spire recalled some infant feat.

Agnes began to feel that she was going to take the first possession of her husband's house as its mistress; and a deep feeling of her responsibilities mingled with her happiness.

Trevor, in a faltering voice, himself welcomed her with a warm embrace to a mansion of his own, and gloried in calling it "*her* home, the home of his beloved, his adored Agnes." Unable any longer to control her feelings, she burst into a flood of tears, and threw herself upon the bosom of her husband. Trevor himself was far from being unmoved, though he blushed to feel that the fulness of his own eyes threatened to mingle his tears with those of his wife.

But those are delicious tears which arise from the excess of happiness—from the overflowing of a full heart, which has no other vent for the expression of its delight. How different from those of regret, passion, or remorse! How different from those which grief sends to dim the eye and plough their furrows on the cheeks over which they flow! But, alas! how few occasions are there in this life for such tears as those which were now shed by Agnes!

The next morning rose brightly, and saw Trevor and Agnes making the round of their estate, becoming acquainted with their tenants and their families: and here we must leave them, attempting to realize all the anticipations indulged in their journey, while we take a cursory view of the events at Fleming Hall.

There could scarcely be two beings with minds and hearts more dissimilar than those of Henry Pomeroy and Amelia Fleming.

A slave to the influence of her beauty, he loved her passionately—madly; and it was with a feeling almost allied to frenzy that sometimes after one of the most eminent effusions of his passion, in which he would picture all his warm feelings, all his sanguine anticipations, that he would hear her coldly refer to her aunt's opinion as to the propriety of his sentiments.

Sometimes, with all the eloquence of love, he would address her for hours together, but obtain little else than placid smiles, cold affirmations and silent consents: still hoping that time, attention, and the warmth of his passion, would at length kindle her into something less statue-like; convinced that she cared for no one else—and hoping that the coldness of the maid would not be carried into the character of the bride—he permitted the preparations for their marriage to proceed. But to be thus at one time warmed into passion by the contemplation of her beauty, and at another chilled into ice by the freezing temperature of her disposition, Henry Pomeroy, though in the full certainty of the possession of his mistress, was far from being a happy lover.

All the preparations for the nuptials of this couple, of course, proceeded perfectly, according to the rules of etiquette. Settlements were drawn up—parchments engrossed—jointure and pin-money discussed—and all the "attorney-ship" of matrimony most punctiliously preserved to the no small annoyance of the impatient Henry.

These were, however, not the only trials of his patience, that he was destined to undergo. For when the settlements were completed, a new wardrobe was to be furnished; and the choice of silks, satins, laces, and sarsnets, occupied quite as much, if not more time than the engrossment of parchments. But Lady Pomeroy was determined that every thing should proceed according to her favorite term *en regle:* and Amelia had no other idea than that of following her aunt's instructions, and of never travelling on single hair's-breadth out of the straight path which fashion and propriety had prescribed.

At length, however, a distant day was fixed—the guests were invited—the bishop of the diocess agreed to perform the ceremony. The bridegroom was as impatient as his patient mother would permit him to be: Amelia was as beautiful, and cold, and lady-like, as ever. The day came—they were united in the presence of a numerous and select assembly at Fleming Hall, partook of an elegant collation, and set off in a post-chariot and four, accompanied by the two bride's maids to a seat which had been settled upon Amelia by her father's will. Their journey was, however, so different from that of Trevor and Agnes, that we are almost ashamed to say, that Henry found the presence of the bride's maids a relief.

The honey-moon of this couple passed, as it might be supposed to pass, where all was passion and rapture on one side, and cold propriety on the other. Ice and fire were not more opposite than the dispositions of Henry and Amelia, though all the fire of the one could not melt the ice of the other.

In the midst of his most passionate delight her chilling punctilio would throw his feelings back upon his heart in an agony, to find that the cold mistress had only become the passionless bride—and that all that she knew—all that she practised—all that she felt—never extended beyond the proprieties of life. His raptures were returned by allusions to ceremony and etiquette. His feelings repressed by punctilious attentions to set forms. Henry gloried that the beauty of his wife equalled that of a Venus of Canova; but he had not anticipated that the likeness would have extended to the marble from which it was sculptured.

CHAPTER XVII.

In the meantime, Trevor and Agnes had almost realized their sanguine anticipations during the first month of her marriage. The morning ramble—the social evening—produced the pleasures they had expected from them, and Agnes was still in the plenitude of their enjoyment, wishing for no change, her heart full of happiness; blessed, and trying to bless; but Trevor soon—very soon began to feel the want of that excitement upon which alone he existed. The calm and quiet enjoyment of his wife's society, which immediately succeeded the first rapturous possession of her beauty, was not at all calculated to keep alive the mind, and the passions, of such a man as Trevor. He missed the necessity for plotting and planning, which had kept him so continually occupied during his probation as a lover;

a perpetual round of the quiet enjoyments, the placid pleasures with a wife, which characterised his present existence, proved to him but a poor compensation for days of restless impatience, succeeded by one hour of rapturous intercourse enjoyed by stealth with his mistress. He began also to be astonished at discovering how much the idea of opposing and tormenting Lady Pomeroy had added to the pleasure he had felt in his interviews with Agnes.

With such feelings as these, the endless succession of morning rambles, noontide rides, and *tête-à-tête* evenings, soon became insipid. Agnes was still as beautiful, her society as delightful, her wit as buoyant, her conversation as brilliant, and her music as sweet as ever; but they were his. He had a right to their possession; he enjoyed them without exertion, and they lost half their value in his opinion.

Ashamed, however, to appear thus vascillating in the eyes of a woman he admired and respected, as he did Agnes, he still kept on in their usual routine, though it was with much the same difficulty as a man feels to keep his eyes open when he is almost irresistibly overpowered with the inclination to sleep. It was in vain, however, that he determined to enjoy himself as usual; the incipient yawn would intrude itself in the midst of his quiet pleasures; the hunting notices were eagerly looked after; the necessity for intercourse with the surrounding gentry was gradually discovered; and the morning ramble was frequently exchanged for a gallop after the fox-hounds; and the quiet evening sometimes broken in upon by the hunting companions Trevor brought home to dinner, or by the necessity for their attendance at some party in the neighborhood.

Agnes sighed at Trevor's discovery of these necessities which he swore were quite as annoying to him as they were to her. "But then, my love," he would say, "one must do as other people do;" and, "one must look after one's interest in the county;" and, "one cannot cut one's neighbors," &c. In short, Trevor was seldom at a loss for some excuse to break in upon the tenor of a life which was, we are ashamed to confess it, beginning to be almost a bore to him.

Some of his fox-hunting companions too had quizzed him for having been tied so long to his wife's apron-string; and this put him on the determination to prove that they were wrong. Others again spoke in raptures of the accomplishments and beauties of his wife; and this gratified his vanity, and made him wish to see her more in society.

Still, however, he would occasionally return to that life from which they had both anticipated so much pleasure, and from which Agnes still derived her principal delight. But we are bound to confess that this was generally during a hard frost, when the scent would not lay; and a fine hunting morning generally interrupted this return to domesticity. A series of frost, however, soon precluded the possibility of hunting altogether; and he was obliged perforce to derive many of his enjoyments from his wife's presence and conversation. This was a little helped at first by an attempt which he made to teach her to skate on the lake in the park, which was now frozen over. But they could not skate after dark, and there was still the long evening to be passed with no other variety than her ever-varying sources of entertainment. But possession seemed to have dulled his powers of discrimination. Agnes, the ever playful, ever-varying Agnes in every thing except her affections, appeared to him all sameness; and the crude, dull, dry dissertations in a newspaper were frequently preferred to the sweetness of her music and the brilliancy of her conversation.

The perusal of the newspaper brought London and all its pursuits to his mind; he began to wonder what such and such people were doing, who was winning and who losing; what the odds were on the next St. Leger; and who would be the leading women of *ton* the next season. In the discussion of these subjects he would become animated, and would entertain Agnes with a hundred projects, which he talked of having once formed, but which of course were given up, now that he had become a married man. Unwilling to believe what she dreaded to find true, Agnes would still tempt him among his tenantry; still exert her powers of pleasing; and still play all that had ever been his favorite tunes. But all in vain. It became at length impossible for her any longer to doubt, that Trevor was tired of the solitude and inaction to which he was condemned in the country. He slept away half the morning on the sofa; was absent when she spoke to him; no longer launched out in praises of the beautiful scenery which had given such a zest to their rides.

Their *tête-à-tête* dinners became silent. Bumper after bumper could scarcely keep him awake; and he half yawned even when the beautiful hand of Agnes was sweeping the strings of her harp, and her voice chanting the melodies in which he had hitherto found so much delight.

He began to fancy that the air grew cold and bleak; voted his country neighbors a bore; talked of the opera and his clubs, and wondered what all the world were doing in town. He gave two or three hints about business and his banker; inquired frequently if Agnes did not long to see her sister and Lady Pomeroy; wondered whether they did not wish for their presence in town, and in short, to use a vulgar phrase, "beat the bush" till Agnes too plainly perceived his drift. He was ashamed so soon openly to confess that all his enthusiasm for solitude and the country had so hastily vanished. His encomiums upon green trees, autumnal tints, delicious rambles, and domestic *tête-à-têtes*, were too recent for him to disavow them. He thought this would be too fickle even for him. But Agnes, with the keen eye of love, read it in his listless glance; understood it in his faint praise of that which a little month since, had called forth enthusiastic admiration; and felt it in the absence of all that pleasure which used to be so apparent during the first weeks of their union

She sighed to think it was so; but her affection found a thousand excuses for her husband in the activity and excitement of his former life.—She gave up her expectations of enjoying life with him alone, and of keeping all his society to herself, and even began to think she had been unjust and selfish in ever having entertained them.

In her own inclination for the continuance of the life they had been leading, she forgot that it

was his own protestations that had led her to imagine that it was to continue; or if she did now and then sigh over the recollection that he had made them, and breathe a wish that he had acted up to them, she repressed her sighs and her wishes within her own breast, and determined to do every thing that could contribute to her husband's pleasure.

Influenced by this determination, she entered the library with the intention of proposing a journey to town, and was thinking how she could prevent his suspicion of the real cause of her proposal, when he met her at the door with an open letter in his hand.—

"Oh, my sweet Agnes," exclaimed he, the most unluckly *contretemps* in the world. These men of business, they never will let one enjoy a peaceful hour in the country; they have no idea of the pleasures of solitude. Would you believe it, my love! this letter is a mandate from my lawyer. It says that the title to the Dorsetshire estate requires immediate and personal attention, and it is of so much importance, that I fear--" Agnes smiled—"yes indeed, love, I fear that I must tear myself away from these peaceful scenes—" Agnes smiled again —"where we have enjoyed so much happiness—"

"And of which you were beginning to be so much tired," interrupted Agnes. "Nay, nay, my Trevor, don't deny it," said she putting her hand playfully on his lips, "it is but natural that a mind like yours should again wish for its usual activity; again wish for the pursuits which habit has rendered second nature."

Trevor protested her society was all that he wished on earth; that her conversation was sufficient; her music the only sweet sounds he wished to hear, But Agnes again stopped him by exclaiming: "Oh, yes! all this is prettily spoken; but confess now, Charles, don't you think you would enjoy my society better, and appreciate my music more justly, had you the opportunity of comparing it with that of others?"

She looked archly as she spoke, and Trevor's consciousness suffused his brow and cheek with that slight glow of confusion, which in a woman would have been dignified with the title of a blush.

A goodnatured shake of the head, an affectionate kiss, and a playful exclamation of "naughty boy," set the whole matter to rights with him; and from this moment every preparation was made to quit that place, in which a few short weeks since he had almost sworn that he could pass his life; that place, within whose limits he had protested were contained all that he wished on this side of the grave; and all that he had sworn was fame, fortune and happiness to him.

The valet and lady's maid were summoned to receive the orders for departure with pleasure, and they obeyed them with alacrity; for they were also tired of the monotony of the country, and were beginning to think of the parson and the parish church by the way of making time pass a little more pleasantly: for valets and waiting-maids have the same inclinations with their masters and mistresses; and green trees, and evening walks, and larks and nightingales, had begun to have their effect upon Watkins and Flounce, as well as upon their betters; when the ideas of a London second table, and the anticipation of meeting the whole tribe of London servants, gentlemen's gentlemen and ladies' waiting gentlewomen in the steward's room in town, with all the *et cetera* of French wines and whist, and the scandalous chronicles of their masters' and mistresses deeds and misdeeds put all their other thoughts to flight, and buried them in the portmanteau and trunks with which they were now occupied.

The imperial-crowned carriage was at length at the hall door. Comfortable cloaks were spread over the rumble-tumble, to protect the persons of Watkins and another man-servant. Flounce with another female servant, occupied a travelling chariot behind; dickies and rumble-tumbles having been excepted in the articles of her engagement.

Post-horses had been ordered from the first stage by the avant courier, who had written forward to bespeak relays. Coffee was swallowed by Trevor; and in high spirits he gave his hand to Agnes, and placed her comfortably in the warm and well-appointed travelling-carriage: the rest of the household, with the exception of the old housekeeper, were to travel by other conveyances to London.

The signal was given; smack went the whips and on went the horses at a pace of twelve miles an hour; but not so fast as Trevor's imagination, which had already travelled to town, and was indulging in his clubs, his Opera-box, and his lounge up Bond street. He had already, in fancy. shaken hands with a hundred of his old acquaintance, who congratulated him on his re-appearance in the world.

Agnes, on the contrary, as the carriage was whirled rapidly through the avenue of elms which had so impressed her on her first arrival, and as particular spots met her view, looked upon them with a deep feeling of regret, at parting from scenes which had been the witnesses of what she then deemed the happiest moments of her life. It was amidst them that she had first given way to the impulse of youthful affection. It was there that she had first seen the happiness of the husband beam in the face of her lover.

Every spot was endeared by some tender recollection, and was thus rendered sacred to her memory.

The journey was thus shortened to them both by the thoughts in which they indulged. Hers were all of the past; his, all of the future. She lived upon memory; he upon anticipation.

Alas! at what an early period of their union for such an affectionate mind and heart as that of Agnes, to find its best and dearest pleasure in the past instead of the future.

Yet were we to analyze the minds of nine-tenths of the husbands and wives in the world, I am afraid this would be found to be the case within three months after their marriage.

About the end of the second day, they entered London just as the gas was illuminating the streets and bridges. Trevor hailed with delight the sight of the crowded and bustling streets; stretched out his neck as the carriage rolled by the club-houses, and exhibited all the signs of returning animation; for he had really begun to feel as though the vital functions of his existence had been suspended during his short vegetation in the country; and as they dashed out of Piccadilly into Park Lane, in

which a house had been taken for them, he inwardly confessed that not all the magnificent scenery of Trevor Park, with its superb avenues, romantic cliffs, and ocean view, could compete with the three or four acres of lilacs and evergreens with which a London square was planted.

Not so Agnes. As the carriage entered London, and the busy bustling world struck again her view, she felt as though she had been suddenly awakened from some delicious dream, and that some demon whispered to her spirit—

Awake! awake! and dream no more.

The thundering knock which announced the arrival of the carriage at their own door, seemed the knell to the quiet pleasures she had promised herself; and it was in vain that during dinner she tried to rally her spirits, so as in some measure to keep pace with those of Trevor, which were animated by every distant knock, and by every sound that told him he was in dear dear London.

As soon as dinner was over, he became fidgetty and nervous; he moved about the room with impatience; and as Agnes arose and quitted the room, he said, he thought he should just take a turn to the club, and join her in the dressing-room.

Agnes herself spent the evening in solitude: she had an indefinable presentiment of evil, which she could not overcome; and as she heard the door close upon Trevor, and listened to the rattling of his carriage wheels as they bore him from the house, her heart felt a void for which she could scarcely account. Her only *appui* seemed to have left her. Her greatest hope seemed to be failing her; and she unwillingly began to dread that the many romantic wishes she had indulged were doomed to meet with nothing but disappointment.

Hour after hour rolled on. But still no Trevor; till at lengh really alarmed at his protracted absence, she was on the point of sending his man to learn at what time he had ordered the carriage, when his knock at the door and his immediate presence quieted her fears for his safety; and a kiss of welcome, aud a candid acknowledgment that his return to his club having been quite *fêted* by his friends had caused his delay, procured a pardon for the first solitary evening he had yet made her pass.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The next morning's breakfast table conversation was filled by Trevor with projects of society and schemes for gaiety. He insisted that Agnes should immediately fix on her nights for quadrilles, concerts, and assemblies, during the season. The visiting list was called for and augmented; and the major-domo ordered to send out innumerable tickets in every direction to which the fashionable world extended, till poor Agnes was absolutely bewildered with the engagements and gaieties in progress; and looked through the long perspective of the season in vain for one evening of that domestic quiet, the anticipation of which, a few weeks since, had formed their whole hopes of happiness.

At length she ventured to stop the buoyancy of Trevor's spirits, by a gentle allusion to the impossibility of any thing like domestic comfort in the vortex of such arrangements as he proposed; and to express her fears that in the midst of such general society, she should have very little, if any, time for the enjoyment of his own.

"Oh, my love," said Trevor, "*ca viendra* with the country in its proper time and season. Here one must do as others do, if we do not wish to be quizzed and laughed at. Yours, my love, are talents that are formed to create the admiration and envy of the world. I already, 'in my mind's eye,' see the men overpowered by the one, and the women dying of the other."

"As to my talents, Charles, I value them only as they seem to amuse you. I want no other admiration than yours. A glance of approbation from your eyes would be dearer to me than the plaudits of the whole world; and as to envy, I have no ambition to excite it."

"But then you know, my love, that as the Honorable Mrs. Trevor, who may be a Countess, you have a certain station in society to keep up, which—which—" and he hesitated; for he was really at a loss to find an excuse for the long series of dissipation which he had enumerated.

"I know I have, Charles," said Agnes, affectionately; "and, believe me, I shall never forget it: but in keeping up this station in society, do not make me lament that I am so seldom to be Mrs. Trevor for yourself alone. For it was you, and not your station, that made me so; and I declare to you, that should the title, which seems all at once to have such charms in your eyes, ever become yours, I should regret being addressed by any other name than that of Mrs. Trevor."

"Thanks, thanks, my love, for your affection. It is gratifying, believe me—gratifying to my heart, and I feel your kindness to my soul; and so, as I was saying, the Marquis of Townley says you will receive cards from the Marchioness—for the 10th and 24th of February, the 12th and 30th of March, and for six assemblies, distributed through May, June, and July."

A long list of other prospective engagements of the same nature were then enumerated. Boxes at the Opera and French play were to be secured. Her name was to be proposed at Almack's; till by the time that Lady Emily Trevor was announced, who came to hear of the realization of all the romantic dreams of domestic happiness, in which her friend and sister had indulged, poor Agnes could hardly recollect that there were such words in the vocabulary; so completely had the whirl of gaiety in which Trevor talked of living, banished them from her remembrance. All that Agnes could do was to assent in silence; though her heart felt acutely that in all these arrangements, the dear thought of domesticity, upon which she had placed so many of her hopes of happiness, seemed to have been entirely forgotten.

Trevor took the opportunity of Lady Emily's arrival to start on his morning's round. Bidding his sister a welcome and a good bye in the same kiss, with an "*au revoir mon amie*" to his wife, he quitted the room, leaving his friends to that

delicious intercourse which the mutual narration of events which have occurred during a short separation, between persons who love each other, always produces.

All the letters of Agnes had glowed with the description of the happiness she was enjoying at Trevor Hall. They spoke the full accomplishment of her dearest wishes—the realization of her most sanguine expectations. Even the letter announcing this sudden change of their determination to pass the whole year in the country, had not even hinted that it was not the perfect wish of her own heart, as well as that of Trevor.

In repeating the pleasures and pursuits of their short sojourn in the country, Agnes again became animated; but Lady Emily thought that she heard a sigh mingle with these descriptions; and Agnes did really experience that feeling of melancholy which pervades the mind and heart, when alluding to those pleasures that are passed away, instead of those which are to come.

Agnes was, however, too generous to give a hint of this incipient feeling to her friend, and anxious to hear how she went on with Hartley she turned the conversation upon him.

"Oh," said Lady Emily, "the creature is just the same teasing mortal he ever was. Where I am, there the man is sure to be with that perpetually grave face, frowning at all my little flirtations and gaieties. I have dismissed him a hundred times by hints and inuendoes; but I might as well, and as wisely, throw snow against a stone wall, as hints at a man that will not understand them."

"He stands his ground, though, I perceive, in spite of all the fine gentlemen by whom you are surrounded and addressed."

"Why, yes, he does that certainly; but it is with much the same air that a two-and-twenty pounder would maintain its station against batteries of pop guns, or an English mastiff against a bevy of lap dogs. My other beaux let fly their light arrows in all directions; they dazzle my eyes in their flight, whirl round my head, but reach no further. But Hartley stands like a well trained engineer; he reserves his fire for great occasions, and comes upon me with some cannon ball of a virtue, that—that—that—"

"Goes home to the heart, I presume you mean," said Agnes, finishing the sentence for her friend.

"No, not exactly so, neither," said Lady Emily. "Reason is but a rough road to the heart. Though I begin to believe, that if once that path is discovered, it is the surest way to win it irrevocably. The man who wins a woman's heart through the eye or the ear alone, though he may make a more rapid progress at first, is not half so secure of its possession as he who reaches it through the medium of her judgment and her understanding."

"Spoken with the true wisdom of my friend and monitress Emily," exclaimed Agnes; "you are indeed all dull reality, without the slightest portion of sentiment and romance in your composition. Now, I—I am all the contrary;" and a sigh, so gentle that she scarcely felt it herself, stole from her bosom, as imagination recurred to that indefinable fear which is the first effect of some dreaded disappointment.

"Oh! you are quite mistaken, my dear Agnes, in your estimate of my disposition. I am naturally as ardent and romantic as yourself; and confess to you that there are many men by whom I have been addressed, who much more resemble my *beau ideal* of a lover, than poor Hartley. But a husband, Agnes, is for every-day wear, and not to be put on upon holydays alone, to glitter for a moment, and be laid by in one's wardrobe till one wants to be brilliant again. A husband is for home consumption, and not for parade abroad. In short, a lover is what wit, and a husband what common sense is to us. The one may amuse us for a moment, but the other is of use to us all our lives."

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Pomeroy now came in to pay their congratulations to Agnes. They had flown to town with eagerness from the comparative solitude of the country, the very moment the etiquette honey-moon of their marriage was passed. Amelia tired of the country, Henry maddened by her continued coldness.

Amelia was still as beautiful as ever, and still as cold and ceremonious. Marriage had made no difference in her, except the speedy adoption of the privilege of a matron to *chaperon* others, and to take precedence of single ladies.

Henry appeared pale, though a hectic flush would now and then cross his forehead and cheeks. His features looked as though he were consuming by some inward fire, which was confined to his own breast, and whose flames were driven back by some chilling influence the moment they attempted to break forth. Altogether, his appearance would not have been an unapt illustration of that lover who is said to have died of his passion for a statue.

After the meeting of the sisters, conversation took a general turn: the opera and the singers—people of fashion and their partics—were freely canvassed; and Agnes soon found herself involved in a round of engagements, which Amelia declared she could not avoid if she intended to live, according to her aunt's idea, *en règle*.

Lady Pomeroy's entrance and subsequent conversation did not at all diminish these engagements. She exclaimed, after any party had been named, "Oh! of course you must go there;" and, "Oh! everybody will be there;" and, "You must not be out of that for the world;" with such like all-powerful reasons. At Trevor's return, all these reasons were confirmed by his wishes, and Agnes, for the present, at any rate, was obliged to give up her own ideas and anticipations of domestic happiness: and she felt herself soon compelled to acknowledge that—

> The glittering dreams which pass before the mind,
> Are not by Heaven for prophecies designed,
> Nor by ethereal beings sent us down,
> But each one is creator of his own.

The common course of things, under these circumstances, led Agnes into a round of society, in which her rank, her talents, and her fortune, gave her a prominent situation. Trevor's invitations were as indiscriminate as they were numerous, and her table was daily therefore covered with visiting tickets, and few people of fashion came to town, whose cards were not immediately despatched to the Trevors, among the "dear five hundred friends" who were to help to kill their time and fill their saloons during the winter, or rather during the season.

Though Trevor's inconstancy of disposition might have taken away from the first fervor of his passion, his vanity was yet gratified by the admiration which his wife every where excited; and as this gratification was of course increased the more she was in society, he urged her into a series of dissipation, entirely contrary to her own inclination and judgment.

It is not, however, in the nature of a young heart not to derive pleasure from percciving that it has the power of communicating it; and Agnes found so much talent to patronise, and so many other outlets for the generous feelings of her nature in society, that in time she became reconciled to it, though her heart turned with regret to all her early anticipations of domestic comfort; but to them she still looked forward, when the close of the season and fashion should again take them back to the seat of Trevor's ancestors, whch she had so recently quitted with so much regret. She was now, however, in the giddy whirl of fashion; and its pursuit left no time for regrets of any sort. Party followed party, and engagement succeeded engagement so quickly, that her time was perpetually occupied, either in recovering from the fatigues of one or preparing for the gaieties of another.

For some days the "world of fashion" had been busy in anticipating the first splendid assembly of the Marchioness of Townley, whose cards had been issued for the opening of her mansion, with the new suit of rooms built by Nash, and furnished by Orchard.

The town was full; and nobody who had the least pretensions to knock at her doors, had omitted leaving their tickets, that their names might not be left out in the distribution of her cards. At the opera, for two or three nights preceding her assembly, the marchioness was actually besieged by the presentation of all the new pretenders to fashion, which coming of age, to a fortune, or to any kind of notoriety had created. But she was a veteran, and had stood all these things these forty years, without having ever complained of fatigue: and she had been known to keep her enamel and her rouge intact for weeks together, when the height of the season and its occupations left her no time to make a new face

This season, the wife of a great financier having opened a mansion in her own square, with the professed intention of rivalling her parties at home, as well as her influence at Almack's, had infused into the aged marchioness more spirit and more extravagance than usual: and she determined to overpower the audacious attempt, and show the difference between the legitimate aristocracy of birth, and the plebeian attempts of a *parvenue*. For her ensuing entertainment, therefore, Gunter was ordered to do his "*possible*." Every preparation was made to render it the most splendid thing of the season; and guests of a certain rank were canvassed with as much avidity to grace her saloon on the evening in question, as the marchioness was herself canvassed by guests of an inferior rank for her permission to be with the crowd, and see their names the next morning among the misters and mistresses who had filled her rooms.

At length the night arrived; and carriage after carriage set down their superbly dressed inmates at the door of the Marchioness The names of these visiters echoed up the spacious staircase, repeated by a dozen different lakeys. The Marchioness herself sat on a damask satin sofa in the first antiroom to receive her guests, and smiled with self-satisfaction, as title after title was roared out by the servants; and more particularly as she was pretty sure that her rich rival lived almost within ear-shot of the high-sounding names that reverberated through her hall and staircase.

At length the company had nearly all arrived. The Marchioness had breathing time between the announcements—to receive the congratulations of her visitors on the splendor of her new apartments and furniture, and on the elegance of her assembly; congratulations, which, from many a female tongue, were uttered with all the bitterness of gall in their hearts, and all the sweetness of honey in their words.

Agnes had arrived early with her friend and sister-in-law Lady Emily, and had as usual drawn round her a conversational circle, which was generally the resort of those who were considered among the literati and the wits of the day. In this circle she was the presiding genius, and though badinage was the order of the moment, but little scandal and less ill-nature could find their way into a conversation which was led by Agnes. It might almost be said, that the little circle over which she presided, had the same precious privilege as that attributed to Ireland, and that no venomous reptile could exist within its precincts. It was to this circle that the dramatist, the artist, and the poet, resorted, with the certainty of attention to their talents and opportunity for their exertion; and though many an exclusive, as she passed by, would cast a disdainful look at the coterie of Agnes Trevor, because the aristocracy of talent was there acknowledged as well as the aristocracy of rank, there were none who more thoroughly enjoyed society than she did. She was indeed the very essence of enjoyment herself, and doubled her own pleasure by communicating it to those around her. In a circle of this sort too, where so many lived in imagination, she often found her own romantic turn reflected in others; and this would often draw her from the contemplation of the more dull realities of life, which she began to feel were very far from being those which she had anticipated.

Quadrilles and *ecarté*-tables were now forming in different apartments. Elderly ladies cut for partners at whist, and young ladies fanned for them in quadrilles. The business of the evening, *id est*, flirtation among the young, a little more than flirtation among the middle-aged, and gambling among the seniors commenced. Cholloner in one apartment and Weippart in another, played, waltzes and quadrilles alternately, and the whole world seemed occupied and in motion, excepting those persons denominated wall flowers who sat round the different apartments motionless, looking like the gilded frame of an animated picture, or resembling the spectators at a cosmorama.

The noise of the carriages had been stilled some time, and the deep oaths of the coachmen had subsided into the silence which betokened the presence of the porter-pots, when the sudden rattle of wheels evidently rotatorying at a most furious rate was heard in the square; and so conspicuous and overwhelming was the noise they made, that

the Babel-like conversation of the crowded rooms, and the shrill harmonicon of Challoner, were nearly drowned in the approach of the vehicle to the house.

In a moment all the carriages in the square seemed to be set in motion—and with them the tongues of their drivers. The newly arrived equipage appeared to have charged full gallop into the phalanx of chariots, coaches, *vis-a-vis*, and cabriolets, surrounding the door of the Marchioness. Nothing was heard for a few moments but the slashing of whips, the trampling of horses, and the oaths of the coachmen. All seemed confusion worse confounded—a confusion which was explained by some who had taken a refuge from the heat of the apartments, and perhaps from the observation of their occupiers in the balcony, stating that it was created by the sudden arrival of a bretchka, with four foaming horses, which was that moment discharging its tenant at the door.

In a minute after, the name of Sir Robert Leslie was bawled out by the porter in the hall. "Sir Robert Leslie," repeated the servant on the first landing—and "Sir Robert Leslie," re-echoed the fellow at the door of the ante-room.

Almost every one who heard the name, repeated it with exclamations of surprise.—"Where did he come from?" "When did he arrive?"—"How long has he been in England?" were questions that each asked of the other, without expecting or receiving any answer. A few wondered at his again venturing into English society. Men who cared for their wives and daughters, felt a slight impression of uneasiness in their minds as the name met their ears; and the cheeks of many a lady from twenty-five to thirty, tingled with a conscious blush at the announcement of a name which they had too much reason to remember.

Wonders as to his reception were beginning to creep into some of their minds. No time, however, was given for debate upon this point; for the name was scarcely uttered by the last animated repeater of the Marchioness, before Sir Robert Leslie had bowed upon her hand—received her mechanical welcome—and passed into the inner apartments nodding, bowing, shaking hands, smiling away frowns, or frowning down appearances of anger, to the indignation of some, the amusement of others, and the astonishment of all.

Sir Robert Leslie was precisely in person, what the French would call *un bel homme*. He was rather above the middle height, perfectly well made, with a countenance, the principal attention of which was its openness—an openness, however, which, on certain occasions, degenerated into an expression of daring recklessness, which spoke very plainly that fearlessness of consequences was one of his principal characteristics. In his manners he was perfectly easy and familiar with every body, without even being obtrusive. In his dress there was nothing conspicuous, and yet there was that about it which made every body attempt an imitation, and attempt it unsuccessfully. The secret was, that his dress was precisely that which suited his person.

If his demeanor could be called any thing, it was modest—without diffidence—and formed a remarkable contrast to the character which he so justly bore in the world. It was this which surprised every body, and threw every body off their guard. At a first introduction, and without some positive knowledge of facts, nobody, from his quiet unobtrusive manner, his sterling good sense on the subjects on which he conversed, the innocent play of his imagination, and the correct tenor of his expressions and general conversation, could possibly conceive Leslie to be the gay, daring, reckless, and voluptuous libertine that he was. His intimate friend and associate, Frederick Villars, was wont to call him the "most impudent man alive, with the most modest demeanor in the world;" and often said, that he envied him more for this appearance of modesty, than for any other of the many high qualifications he possessed, and swore that the principal part of the *bonnes fortunes* with the fair, was more owing to this than to that dash and impudence to which they were too apt to be attributed.

From the period of the newspaper paragraphs, which the reader will recollect created so much discussion in Mrs. Dashington's establishment, when our hero figured away under the initials of Sir R—— L——e, and was designated by the names of the "gay Lothario," the "gallant Colonel," the favored lover," and all those other epithets with which newspaper morality chooses to decorate "adulterers," Sir Robert Leslie had resided, or rather travelled on the Continent. Little was known of him in England, excepting that his character for gallantry was quite as conspicuous in the circles of Paris, Rome, Florence and Naples, as it had been in those of London. Rumor said, that he had been called several times to the field to answer for misdemeanors of the same nature; and it was known that in one instance he had absented himself from the more populous towns, and had been supposed to be residing with some beautiful recluse, in the seclusion of some Italian villa, near the Lago Maggiore.

All was, however, but rumor; nothing was certainly known of him, excepting by his friend Villars, who was his Pylades, his Pythias, his second self.

The same uncertainty attended the fate of the unfortunate lady who had accompanied him from England. There were sad reports of desertion, of remorse, of repentance, and of death. Rumor had even hinted at self-destruction; but there was no certainty. She had thrown herself out of the pale of society. She had been too beautiful to be easily forgiven. Virtuous women could not sully their lips by inquiries after a frail fair one, who had outshone them; time buried her good and amiable qualities in oblivion, and left nothing but the memory of her frailty for the malice of her friends to descant upon.

But amid all the reports which had gone forth on the broad pinions of rumor, that she had loved again, had never been whispered. Malice therefore being silent on this point, she was supposed dead.

As the name of Sir Robert Leslie struck upon the ear of Agnes, it recalled to her memory the paragraphs, and the account of the duel which had at the time made so great an impression upon her mind; and her decided dislike of the character he bore, was not unmixed with curiosity to see a man of whom the world had said so much, and of whom this newspaper history had made her think a great deal, in spite of herself. She was not, however, so placed that she could see him at his

entrance, and nobody pointed him out afterward. She and Lady Emily exchanged some of their school reminiscences on the subject, and it was dropped in the pursuit of the general conversation.

To the numerous inquiries of where he came from, Leslie said "From Florence," with precisely the same tone that he would have said from Berkeley Square. And to the further interrogatory of when did he arrive, he replied, with the same *sang froid*, that he was only that moment from Italy, and seeing the lights and the carriages, the Marchioness's door was the first at which he had alighted; he had not even been to his own house. With the silly multitude this had its effect, and Leslie calculated upon it; and as to the Marchioness, she imagined that a man of the calibre of Sir Robert Leslie having been actually set down at her party fresh from Florence, would give it *eclat*. This, in her eyes, was a sufficient atonement for all his misdeeds.

The Marchioness, therefore, patronised him; the world followed her example; and Sir Robert Leslie was again as firmly established in society, as though he had never violated the sacred ties of hospitality and friendship; as though he had never led any woman into error, and left her to destruction and despair.

There was one there though who met his salutation with a haughty eye; and whose heart seemed to swell with indignation as he approached the place where he stood. This was the lady's brother, who had called him out upon the occasion; and who felt that a mere shot of etiquette had not appeased his vengeance for the loss of a sister's virtue, or for a blemish upon the fair fame of an honorable family. But the ceremonials of society deemed that he must be satisfied; and he could only lament it in silence, and brood over his resentment in secret. Leslie, however, knew the opinion of the world was with him in the affair of the duel, and was careless how his salutation was received; though he was careful that it should show, that not a jot of resentment was harbored on his own part.

The buz of Leslie's entrance, and the wonders which his arrival created, had soon subsided; and the general conversation of the circle around Agnes was resumed. As usual, poetry was the subject they were discussing; and Agnes was encouraging an argument between a celebrated admirer and eulogiser of Shakspeare, and a French *petit maitre* attached to the French embassy, who was shrugging his shoulders at Hamlet, Macbeth, and Romeo and Juliet, and attempting to ridicule Shakspeare, while he trumpeted forth the praises of Racine and Corneille.

"Shakspeare's court, Sir," replied a stranger approaching, "was human nature. You wonder he could know how kings thought and felt.—He dived into the heart of man; and the hearts of monarchs are human, subject to human passions, to human virtues, and to human frailties. By drawing all his illustrations from the heart, he spoke to its feelings, as well as to the imagination. Nature is the prolific source of the poet, and Shakspeare never swerved from her laws."

The stranger's eyes at this moment encountered those of Agnes, which gave him a glance of approbation; and as he moved on and mingled with the crowd, she wondered who he was, and felt surprised that a man who was evidently of the *elite* of society, should be unknown both to herself and Lady Emily, who had been equally amused with the few observations with which the stranger had put down the pertinacious Frenchman.

There had been something about the gaze of this stranger, and in the tone of his voice, that had interested Agnes, and she was on the point of sending some one to enquire his name, when she again heard his voice exclaiming, "My dear Trevor, how do you do?" which was immediately succeeded by a joyful exclamation on the part of Trevor; who, hurrying him through the crowd, saying, "Come, I must introduce you to Mrs. Trevor," broke into her circle, and presented the stranger as "Sir Robert Leslie."

CHAPTER XIX.

Leslie's establishment was *si bien monté*, and the whole of his domestics so well trained, that by the time of his arrival in Audley Square from the Marchioness's party, his whole suite of apartments were ready to receive him; and the next morning found him "at home" in his library, with every thing about him precisely the same as though he had never quitted his house. Leslie had many of the true ideas of an English gentleman, and would never have thought of going abroad to spend his income among foreigners, while he kept no establishment at home. Leslie Hall, therefore, in Leicestershire, and the town-house in Audley Square, were both kept with competent establishments, and sometimes formed the residence of one or other of the different branches of his family during his absence.

The library in which he now lounged over his chocolate was his favorite apartment of a very superb suite of rooms, more peculiarly appropriated to himself and his private pleasures. Its windows opened into the garden, and it was divided into recesses and compartments, each devoted to a particular subject of literature, which was designated by some cast from the antique, or by the statue of some modern artist, where the antique did not furnish an apt illustration. Leslie was a patron of the arts, because their contemplation gave him pleasure: he was an encourager of talent, because its exertion afforded him entertainment; and as pleasure was the only thing he lived for, and as his passions were his masters, not to say his tyrants, every thing that could in any way tend to the accomplishment of the one, or the gratification of the other, became the object of his attention.

Leslie swallowed his chocolate, reading note after note as they came pouring in from everybody who knew of his arrival: many of these were folded in those curious and quaint shapes, and written upon those tinted papers which females generally choose for their billets. Some of them excited smiles of pity, some of contempt, and some elicited a pshaw! but most of them were consigned to the flames; some were laid carefully by for his own proper answer, and others were handed over

to La Tour, who well knew the part he was to play with their writers.

As card after card arrived, Leslie, who had possessed some slight forebodings as to his reception in London, became easier, and indulging himself in sundry sneering reflections upon the caprices of what was called the world, gave himself up to his usual hearty contempt for public opinion.

"Now here," said he, "had I, like a poltroon, sneaked and begged my way back into society, by aping repentance, why they would have kicked me out of it; but by braving them and showing that I do not care a straw for them, I am courted from all quarters; and it is for the opinions of such as these, that men make life a misery instead of a delight, by curbing those passions which were bestowed upon us by a bounteous nature for our enjoyment. Here, La Tour, answer these cards according to your own fancy; you may dine me where you please; quadrille me where you please; I give you a *carte blanche*, with one exception, and that is, Trevor House; whenever a card comes from that quarter, let no engagement intervene to prevent my accepting it; nay, put off every other for any invitation from Trevor."

"Trevor, Monsieur! Celui qui nous a fait rire tant a Napoli?"

"Yes, Sir, Trevor. Pourquoi non!"

"Oh rien, Monsieur; mais—"

"Je n'aurai point de mais, Les Trovers—"

"*Les* Trevors!" with emphasis on the Les.

"Oui; il est marié."

"Et Madame?"

"Belle comme un ange!"

"Ha! ha! C'est bien different. Je vous demande bien pardon;" and Latour's shoulders paid a visit to the back of his head, while he muttered in a kind of sotto voce. "Le pauvre monsieur, c'est bien dommage;" the library door opened, and Mr. Trevor was announced,

"Trevor, my dear fellow, you are welcome, and thrice welcome, since you are the first who have welcomed me to England in my own house. This is liberal of you, too. I was afraid that, as a married man, you might be changed, turned into a mere domestic utensil, of no other use than to stir the fire, carry a fan, with permission to gad just the length of your wife's apron string."

"Changed, Leslie? Not a jot; you and Villars will find me just the same fellow you did in Naples (another visit from La Tour's shoulders to his head) ready to follow where you and he will lead—as I have often done before. Ah, La Tour, how do?"

"Nay, nay, Trevor, you have given up your liberty—fettered yourself with voluntary chains—quitted our glorious society of free knights, and are only fit for the *menage*, or the *manege*, which is sometimes much the same thing.

"Oh, I beg your pardon; you don't know Mrs. Trevor; she is any thing but *exigeante*, I assure you, and permits me to frequent my clubs—give my bachelors dinners—and to be a *garçon parfait*, with the addition of a *domus*, which I will say is never rendered any thing but *dulce*, and I am sure you will find it so whenever you choose to make it yours"—another shrug from La Tour.

"Why, Trevor, you will give even me an inclination for matrimony, if you go on at this rate; you seem employed as a decoy duck, and sent out on the wing to entrap others into the snare which sits so easily and gracefully upon yourself, because you are used to it."

"Ha, Leslie, you are, at any rate, still the same, I see; but let me warn you, my dear fellow, don't *debiter* any of these free principles before Mrs. Trevor. She has received and welcomed all my friends as though they were her own; to be known and liked by her husband is a passport to her favor, and I would not have you excluded. I would have you well with her, (La Tour shrugged his shoulders again) though that cursed affair of the little countess has cast a stigma upon you, which it will require all your good behaviour to get over, for she has some d—d odd old-fashioned notions upon these points; however, you made a good beginning last night; your defence of her favorite Shakspeare pleased her; and she said you said something about nature that could not come from a bad heart."

At this moment a voice was heared coming through the anti-rooms. "Oh up stairs, in the library-room is he?—never mind—won't trouble you, my fine fellow—could find my way blindfold---"

"That perpetual jackall to other people's desires, *D'Oyley:* have you given him any commission?"

"No," said Leslie, "you are the first person I have seen; but I have no doubt he is come in search of me; for he is really a much greater bore from his civility than other people are by the contrary; now adieu to the sound of any other person's voice than his own." Open flew the door, and in came D'Oyley.

"Ah, Sir Robert, my dear Sir Robert, welcome, thrice welcome to England and London, for what could England do without London? Ha, La Tour, what, with your master still—a chair—a chair—wheugh!"

"Why, D'Oyley, what's the matter?" asked Trevor.

"Matter! why that malicious devil Lady Betty Lascelles has given me a trot two miles after a fan she never lost; and her sister insisted upon my going to the observatory at the top of the house to see what sort of a day it was."

"Ha! ha! ha! with both of which desires you complied!"

"To be sure: how can one refuse to be civil? and if there is anything I do understand, it is civility. By the by, Sir Robert, do you remember giving me a commission the day before you quitted England?—beg pardon for the unpleasant allusion—but you gave me a commission to buy a particular edition of Rousseau?"

"Upon my word, D'Oyley, I cannot precisely recollect."

"Oh but you did! It was just five years ago last March. Well, as, luck would have it, in my way here this morning I found it at Evans's, stuck in between the 'Rights of Women' and the 'Age of Reason,' decorated with a splendid binding, amidst a parcel of unbound lumber on morality and divinity. It seemed mightily ashamed of the dulness of its company; so I ordered the bookseller to send it to you, and place it to your account for the year eighteen hundred and twenty-eight. It is the very best edition; for if there is anything I do understand, it is books."

"Oh, I remember; it was just at the time I was laying siege to a little heart that doted upon sentimentality, and I wished to engage Rousseau as an aide-de-camp."

"Sapper and Miner you mean, baronet: doesn't he Trevor?" interrupted D'Oyley. "Oh! but I forgot you are a married man, and don't understand these things. Ah, Trevor! you have a charming wife. Do you know Mrs. T., Sir Robert? if not, I'll introduce you. But I see you are adonising; let me sent you a little of my *huile à la rose blanche*, 'tis a distillation of my own; beats Bayley and Blew out of the field; gives a brilliant gloss to the *moustache*, and distributes a delicious perfume through the surrounding atmosphere. If there is anything on earth I do understand, it is perfumery."

"Thank ye, D'Oyley; but you know I make no toilet," said Leslie, as his valet adjusted his stock.

"No toilet?" exclaimed D'Oyley; "Come, that is good, isn't it, Trevor? when all the world knows you are the most indefatigable laborer in the vineyard of libertinism that any romance-writing lady of the nineteenth century ever described or thought of in the utmost luxuriance of her imagination."

"You flatter me." La Tour, who continued writing the cards at a distant table, again shrugged his shoulders.

"No, honor! you may believe me; mayn't he, Trevor?"

"You are mistaken; indeed you are," said Leslie. "I take every thing calmly; I may throw the net, but I never, never bait. The fish always swim into the meshes of their own accord."

"Les pauvres petits poissons!" murmured La Tour.

"Well, how the devil you manage it I cannot tell," said D'Oyley.—"Here I fag for the women from morning till night, and from night till morning. If they wanted a pattern of a Chinese lady's slipper, or a mandarin's head-dress, a pound of unadulterated green tea, or any other article of curiosity and scarcity, I believe I should ride post to Canton to procure it. If their caprice wished for the feather of an Indian peacock, I dare say I should make a voyage to Hindostan to pluck it from his tail. I would run from here to Finsbury Square to pick up a lady's reticule, while I believe you would not cross the way to pick up the lady herself. Yet are you adored by the whole sex, while poor I am thought nothing of."

"My dear D'Oyley, you don't understand the sex."

"Not understand them! come, that's good, isn't it, Trevor? I that have been in love with every celebrated beauty for the last ten years; I that have danced with dowagers, and check-mated their grand-daughters; not understand them! when if there is anything I do understand, it is women; my dear baronet, I've studied them."

"Yes, D'Oyley, as the butterfly studies botany; just flapping your wings upon them *en passant*, so that you never taste the sweets of any of them. Do you expect to ascertain the depth of the ocean by skimming its surface? No, no! your knowledge of woman is much like that of the would-be philosopher, who has dipped into all the sciences without initiation into any of them. His mathematics are confounded by his metaphysics, his metaphysics subverted by his mechanics, and his mechanics blown to the devil by his chemistry."

"Mr. Hartley coming up, Sir Robert."

"My cousin Hartley in town? then I must prepare for a grave face."

"And I too," said Trevor. "He is the matter-of-fact lover of my sister Emily; so to avoid it *au revoir*, you'll be at White's, or I shall meet you in the Park, or somewhere, at present, any where to avoid a lecture." And away went Trevor.

"Which I," exclaimed Leslie, know full well how to receive, as harmless as though I were covered with the shield of Achilles. Hartley, my dear fellow, what heard of my arrival, and come to welcome me with a lecture?"

"No, cousin Leslie. If the lectures which your own conscience must have read to you have failed of their effect, my arguments must of course fall powerless to the ground."

"Well, then, pray believe that my conscience has done the duty of all consciences, and it will save us both a vast deal of trouble," said Leslie.

"Oh, a vast deal!" exclaimed D'Oyley. "Conscience is very impertinent, and every thing impertinent ought to be decidedly cut; and if there is any thing I do understand, it is cutting—from a card paper pattern, to one's best friend."

"Aye, Mr. D'Oyley, but mind that conscience does not cut in return."

"But what constellation," said Leslie, "my dear Hartley, has had sufficient attraction to draw you from your rustic retirement? Ever since we quitted Christ Church, I have buried you in logic and philosophy, and expected to hear my next intelligence of you in the general reward of all great geniuses and profound students, a Greek epitaph, with a few Roman letters at the end of it.

"Quite appropriate; an epitaph in a dead language, which I shall be very happy to translate for the benefit of the unlearned and the ladies; for if there is any thing on earth I do understand, it is the dead languages.

"No, no, Leslie! philosophy has not been my pursuit, I assure you; nature has made me the simplest of her children, and in nature alone have I found sufficient to admire and enough to please."

"Nature! why, cousin, you are a perfect epicure in pleasure. Nature, too, is my pursuit."

"Egad baronet, you are right," said D'Oyley. "But Hartley pursues her in trees and turnips, while you follow her in the delightful form of woman."

"True, D'Oyley, but unfortunately nature is not more disfigured by the shears which clip a yew tree into the form a peacock, in the leaden Venus which decorates a citizen's garden, or in the mathematical figures of a Dutch plantation, than in the affected sensibility, the rouged cheek, the enamelled lip, the pencilled eyebrow, *gigot* sleeves, and padded back, of a modern fine lady *a la Francaise*."

"Egad, right again, exclaimed D'Oyley; woman is the most unnatural piece of nature in the world."

"There, Mr. D'Oyley, you are wrong," said Hartley; "on woman nature has originally bestowed her choicest gifts. For if they would but follow her dictates, where would she shine with

more effect? Can the sun, sparkling upon the clearest stream, yield more lustre than the liquid eye of a beautiful woman, which, like the tranquil wave, seems to catch its azure tint from the heavens themselves? Can any flowers give such pleasure to the botanist as those which blossom in the garden of her cheeks?"

"Egad, Hartley, quite poetical," exclaimed D Oyley.

"And quite as romantic," added Leslie.

"Well, cousin Leslie, you know we always differed in these points. Like the bee, you could always leave the flower whose honey you had tasted, to wither in the evening's blast, while you sought the same repast in another, that opened its fresh blossoms in the sunshine of the morning."

"Oh, my dear coz, I have all the arguments of the moral philosophers against my system by heart."

"Or, rather, by rote," said Hartley.

"Look round my library; there they are, all ranged in rows; very good for show, but of little use in practice."

"Ethics, literally laid upon the shelf, I declare," observed D'Oyley.

"Yes, there they are," continued Leslie; "and observe, all in good company. Venus pointing to heaven from the tops of my folios on divinity, because they both professed to lead to the same place. Bacchus presses his Tuscan grape over my morals—"

"That it may no longer prove a dry subject," interrupted D'Oyley; "well, if there is any thing I do understand it is repartee."

"Iris presides over my metaphysics, because she is always in the clouds, and seems to ride upon a tangent; Momus puts Melpomene and Thalia out of countenance over the drama, to show the triumph of farce over wit and feeling; Cupid sits sharpening his arrows over my poetry; while the Graces are for once emblematical of gratitude, by supporting Lord Chesterfield, to whom they were so infinitely indebted for their introduction to high life."

"Ha! ha! ha! a most judicious arrangement, truly; and quite worthy of the baronet, isn't it, Hartley?"

"Oh, quite! but by their splendid bindings, you have attended to their outsides, however you may have neglected their contents."

"Oh! my dear cousin," said Leslie, "inspect them, and you'll find their outsides quite emblematical of the pages within. My stoical philosophers I bind in Russia, to depict their frigidity—"

"Or rather," said D'Oyley, "to show that they are banished to Siberia—"

"My ancient poets I case in classic vellum—"

"And your moderns—"

"I hang a calfskin on their recreant backs—while Ovid, Catullus, Secundus, and Little—you will find in sheets,

'Loose, unattired, warm, and full of wishes.'"

"Aye, Sir Robert, I see it is with you as with all of us. Woman is indeed the pole-star of our attractions—the goddess of our adoration.—Hartley, give me a pinch of snuff.—Good, very good; if there is any thing I do understand, it is snuff."

"Well, for my part," said Hartley, "I love the sex; but neither with your freedom, Sir Robert, nor with the devotion of Mr. D'Oyley. I look upon woman as sent to ameliorate the many evils which cross even the most prosperous paths—as calculated, when their talents are neither flattered nor perverted, to constitute the truest happiness our nature is capable of enjoying."

"Oh!" exclaimed Leslie, "as to that for which they were intended, they have wandered so far from the path, that their original destination is scarcely to be discerned on the map of female understanding; all I know is—they are my delight—and I inquire no further."

"But rest contented," rejoined Hartley, "with the destruction of the object which contributes to your pleasure, as the worm exists upon the rose it destroys."

"But how the devil do you contrive to please the women as you do?" asked D'Oyley.

"How do you think, D'Oyley?"

"Why, by being civil and obliging."

"No such thing," said Leslie; "your civil and obliging persons are the most annoying things in the world." A shrug from the shoulders of Monsieur La Tour.—"How do you think, Hartley?"

"Perhaps," said Heartley, "by praising the qualities they possess, which deserve praise."

"Wrong again," pursued Leslie. "It would be too much labor to find them out—so I e'en praise them for qualities they do not possess—discover charms which nobody has yet thought of in their persons; and sentiments they never dreamt of in their minds. And like the world, who quit the beaten paths of known truths, to read with avidity fictitious accounts of wonderful discoveries;—so will woman, lovely woman, delight in the lie, and love the liar;

'Hug the offender and forgive the offence.'"

"But do you never poetise them?" asked D'Oyley.

"No, indeed; sighs and sonnets may, perhaps, do for a pretty boarding-school Miss in her teens, whose whole education consists in just enough French and Italian to read warm novels with the help of a translation, to which they always refer when their ignorance of the original prevents their arrival at the *dénouement* so speedily as they may wish; and whose musical knowledge enables her finger to play at leap-frog through an accompaniment on the harp or piano, just to say she has a soul for music."

Hartley here could not help joining in the laugh, while Leslie continued: "As to your country ladies, whose sole stock of litterature never reached beyond the Spectator or the Tatler, who have learned to be virtuous from Richardson's Pamela, and studied the arts of men from Clarissa Harlowe—these I leave to you, D'Oyley, and to you, cousin Hartley."

"Upon my soul, we are infinitely obliged, my dear Baronet!" exclaimed D'Oyley.

"But gentlemen, good morning—my return has of course involved me in a multiplicity of business.—D'Oyley, I shall meet you at White's; and in the mean time, perhaps, you will drop in at Tattersal's or Morris's and look me out a fine hackney for the parks."

"With the greatest pleasure, Baronet; for if there is any thing I do understand, it is horseflesh;" and away tripped D'Oyley, delighted at having any thing to do for any body; but more particularly for Sir Robert Leslie, who he already perceived was to be again a feature in society.

"Hartley, I suppose I shall meet you at Trevor's dinner, as Lady Emily is there."

"Do you dine at Trevor's?" inquired Hartley, earnestly.

La Tour looked up from his occupation, and his eye encountered that of his master, as he said with *nonchalance*—

"To be sure I do; we met on the continent, and I found him such a pleasant fellow, that I am anxious to cultivate his acquaintance in England." Again his eyes were met by those of La Tour, whose shoulders were again paying their accustomed visit to his head. Hartley took his leave.

Leslie finished an air from Giovanni, and departed for his morning's stroll.

At eight he was at Trevor House, and evidently felt by the reserve with which he was received by Agnes and Lady Emily, that there was a prejudice against him in the minds of both those ladies.

He affected not to observe it; and as the dinner advanced, and his conversation turned on subjects connected with litterature and the arts—and he descanted freely, yet modestly, on music—and led the way to a dissertation on the human heart, its passions, its frailties, and the imperfections of our nature, the character of the man became gradually forgotten; and even Hartley began to think that Leslie was no longer the libertine he had formerly been.

From these subjects he passed to poetry and romance—discussed their influence on the imagination, and found an apology in violence of feeling and in a romantic disposition for many of the errors of human nature. At every sentence that either himself or any one else uttered that could possibly bear upon that scene of his life which was too well known to be denied, a sudden glow would appear to overspread his countenance, his voice would falter, a painful recollection and an internal regret seemed to overpower him, and the recovery of his self-possession appeared the effect of some strong effort of the mind; and thus he proceeded, till both Agnes and Lady Emily were almost persuaded the only crime they knew him to be guilty of had been the result of some sudden and violent passion, rather than of premeditation, and began to think the general character they heard of Leslie, to be devoid of foundation, and arising more from scandal than truth.

In conversations of this kind the effect Leslie wished to produce was greatly assisted by that openness of countenance and almost carelessness of manner that seemed to set hypocrisy at defiance. His eye met those of the person he was speaking to with the full gaze of conscious honesty; and like that of many of his *caste*, it never had any peculiar expression when he was addressing even the woman he had determined to make his victim. Yet a close observer might, in the midst of his apparent openness, have discovered a sinister expression, almost imperceptible, and might perceive at intervals his gaze fixed upon some female form as though he were measuring its fair proportions, and calculating upon the pleasures which its possession might be supposed to bestow.

During this dinner, and the evening which succeeded—for Mrs. Trevor had a select concert and supper in the evening—Leslie contrived to obliterate many of the prejudices against him.

Agnes was delighted with the boldness of his opinions—with their difference from those which are so servilely followed by others—and by the wit which he satirised the follies—the respect with which he spoke of the virtues of the age. His powers of description were great; and as he described the various scenes through which he had passed, she could almost imagine she was herself wandering over the Alps, winning her way up the Pyrenees, or gazing upon the calm skies and olive-covered plains of Italy. There was scarcely a part of his conversation that did not strike some chord of unison in the mind of Agnes. The fact was, that Leslie had early perceived her romantic disposition, and he dressed his conversation accordingly

Lady Emily was more cautious in admitting impressions in his favor; but yet could not refuse him her meed of admiration, and her pity for the remorse, which she might suppose, from his manner, that he still suffered for his crime. As to Trevor, he was delighted that one whom he was proud to call his friend had overcome the prejudices, which he was afraid his wife would have imbibed against him, and saw no farther than the pleasure which he had always derived in his society; and even Hartley, who had known him the most reckless boy at Eton, and the most licentious gentleman-commoner of Christchurch, was almost deceived into a belief that he had formed a wrong estimate of his heart.

CHAPTER XX.

Leslie was one of those anomalies in human nature that there was no studying. His sometimes apparent effeminacy, and almost *petit-maître* manners, were completely counteracted by his daring bravery.

His affectation of ignorance was contradicted by a conversation on all subjects, which showed at least a superficial knowledge of every thing he touched upon; and where his imagination could work, it supplied the place of learning and of memory.

The accusation of an unfeeling disposition and insensibility seemed almost impossible to be just, where the greatest sins had arisen from violence of passion, of which nothing had been suffered to impede the gratification. But half these sins were known to the world, and those only so far as their pursuit and successful termination. The succeeding cold-heartedness, the subsequent desertion of his victims, the something worse that was whispered, remained untold; and like the gay butterfly, he was still the "admired of all admirers,"—

"The glass of fashion and the mould of form,"

in which all men dressed themselves—from whom all men modeled themselves—and with which wo-

men played till they discovered the sting only by its effects.

The mind of such a man as this it is difficult to describe by anything which he permitted to appear outwardly. We must therefore let him speak for himself in a correspondence with that partner of his travels and intrigues, who was not bold enough again to venture into the circle of his country's society, after having violated those ties by which it is held together.

Villars had been his school-fellow at Eton, his chum at Christchurch, his companion in all his Sybaritian intrigues of London and the Continent. Reading the same books, forming themselves upon the same models, they made all their studies tend to the same end.

Born with high passions, increased by the voluptuous nature of their pursuits, their end was pleasure—excitement was their aim; and every thing which produced it was pursued, till, at the age of thirty, they might, like the Roman emperor, have offered a reward for a new sensation:—the world had no new novelty to present to them but "virtue;" and that was too cold a goddess to persuade them to follow in her train.

With regard to pleasure, they were in the state of Alexander, who wept that he had no more worlds to conquer—so they could weep that there were no new pleasures to enjoy.

Between men, who thus knew each other to the very bottom of their hearts, we may imagine a correspondence to exist without disguise; and it was to write to his friend that Leslie, ordering himself to be "not at home" to any one, shut himself up in his library, where amidst all the elaborate works which he had the day before enumerated as having been written on virtue and morality—amidst all the moral disquisitions of Bacon and Boyle, and the works of more sacred writers, he had often sat down with no other view than to plot the destruction of innocence, and the violation of the most sacred duties of society. Nay, even in its very precincts, under the very eyes of those worthies of morality and literature.—But he shall speak for himself in the following epistle:—

LESLIE TO VILLARS.

"Talk not to me, Fred, of your olive-colored ladies of Spain—your dark-eyed women of Tuscany—nor of your conversational and piquant demoiselles of France, for I am more than ever confirmed in my theory, that England is, after all, the garden of the sex—the *parterre* in which the choicest flowers grow indigenously. Yes, Villars, whether for wife or mistress—whether for the dalliance of an hour, or as a companion for life a thing that you and I never covet)—whether we think of them with the views of a voluptuary, or look to them only as to the enjoyment of their conversation and society, in my mind, the women of England stand paramount among all the others in Europe; and you know that I have tried enough of them to constitute my opinion a pretty tolerable authority. But I must not let my enthusiasm run away with me; for you know I can be enthusiastic about women; and what is better, can appear to be so to the dear souls themselves upon occasion, even though I may not be so in reality.

Well, and now to answer your queries as to my reception in this old emporium of all our early follies and frolics—dear London. Read, and for the future say that Leslie is a true prophet: for, as I prognosticated, my dear Villars, so has it turned out—my affair here is blown over. Time, that great physician to all the evils, and the great destroyer of all the goods, excepting wine and antiquities, of this world, has buried the event, which made so much noise at the moment, in a thousand others of the same nature, more interesting, because more recent.

These are not the days of our grandmothers, when elopements and crim-cons were scarce—hardly a morning paper but now records some frail step or other; and the number of things of the same sort that have happened since my affair, together with a number which, from certain outward appearances, are anticipated, have closed the mouth of scandal against me and my little "delito," and given plenty of occupation for that most expressive feature of the human face with others.

My return was therefore welcomed every where. Among the men you know, there was of course no doubt as to my reception; and as to the women, dear souls, I really believe that, had they dared, they would have received me like a triumphant conqueror, with the waving of their white cambric handkerchiefs. Good generous souls! you know they always exonerate our sex from blame, and fix it on their own; excepting indeed in their own particular cases, and then both you and I know that they can be bitter enough upon occasion.

Then, by ruining one you oblige so many, so that the majority is always in your favor. But to my narrative—I knew that the only way was to carry the thing by a *coup-de-main;* not to give the demurrers a moment for reflection and memory, but to dash at once into the midst of our old circle, and run the gauntlet of exclamations and surprises.

To give time for the papers to announce, (and the devils are always sure to have it,) that Sir Robert Leslie, Bart. "had arrived at his house in Audley Square from the continent," was to give time for all the old tabbies of widows, wives, and spinsters, to convocate and cabal, and make a party against me; and who knows what they might not have effected against a poor, unprotected, injured person like myself. Accordingly I toiletted at the last stage; gave orders to La Tour to drive through the squares, and set me down at the first house where lights and carriages should give the tokens of an assembly; dashed into town full gallop, and determined, like Cromwell and Buonaparte, to appear in the very midst of the conspirators.

As luck would have it, the first open house we came to, was that of the old Marchioness of Townley.

Oh, Villars! had you heard the buzz that went from circle to circle, and from room to room, as the name of Leslie once more echoed through a London staircase! I verily thought the dancers would have become motionless, and the lights have been extinguished as those were which we read of in our childhood in some fairy tale, and have, I believe, seen on the stage in a pantomime, on the entrance of some renowned magician, whether

beneficent or not, I cannot call to mv recollection.

Our hostess, the marchioness, was just in the same place, and on the same satin damask settee, receiving her company, as we last saw her five years ago; that *memorable night*—dost remember it, Fred? I do! Her diamonds and her rouge seemed as though they had never been misplaced since, except, indeed, that there might be a little more of the latter to hide the five additional wrinkles in which the five additional years are recorded in that face, which, instead of being called the index of the mind, should rather be termed the index of time, for it is there he keeps his score; and as though the old gentleman could not write, he never settles an account with us that he does not make his mark; and putting his "crow's foot" upon it, "delivers it as his act and deed."

I bowed upon the old lady's hand, with a "how d'ye do, Marchioness," of a day's separation, and sailed into the saloon.

Had I really dropped from the clouds, the sensation could not have been much greater. The awkwardness of Icarus was, that he fell upon his head; but I, as usual, lighted on my feet.

"How did he come? where from? when did he arrive?" met my ears in whispers, in every direction; and I was not quite deaf, my dear Villars, to the little addenda to these whispers of "How well he looks! Just the same creature as ever!"

When a woman calls one creature, one is always sure to be well with them: they go a step further when they call us "wretch;" though they sometimes, very unjustly, accuse us of entitling them to this monocognomen.

As I said before, the quadrillers, those who knew me, nearly stood still. Challoner bawled out *chassez-quatre*, and settled their wonder. Then there were little coteries of old women drawing up their prim countenances in corners, that were smoothed down by my address to them, and by all my bland inquiries after each of their favorite propensities. My memory flowed full upon me, and I was blessed with a perfect recollection of all their little peculiarities; so I pressed them into my immediate service as pioneers to clear the way before me.

Here and there were half-dozens of young ladies, come out since we left England; these were peering at me from behind screens, fans, and window curtains, evidently showing that they had heard of me, and regarded me with a curiosity, which, excuse me, Fred, seemed more than gratified. Poor souls, they don't know yet what they are come out for!

The men of course welcomed me, all except one! and as you know the last time we parted he had a fair shot at me, I think he ought to have welcomed me too; but the fellow looked as though he cursed himself for being a bad shot, which is very ungrateful, since he cannot but remember that I had my choice of firing at him at ten paces, or at an oak-tree at thirty; and chose the latter, to the utter demolition of a complete dose of bark, and to the safety of the third button of his waistcoat. I had ten times rather that a fellow should fire at me till his powder was exhausted and his punctilio satisfied, than that he should thus bear malice· besides after all. he was only her brother.

Well, I was soon perfectly at home with every body: Lady D—— looked very doubtful, but I settled her with a waltz; Mrs. T. turned up her little black eyes, and lifted up her pretty hands: you must remember those taper fingers, because I have seen them within your own, when she little thought that you merely pressed her hand to convince me how well you were with her. Oh! Fred, Fred, you are a sad dog, and there is no reforming you; I brought her over in a quadrille, and before the *grand rond* she had made the grand tour with me in imagination: and with a little hesitation, and a softened voice, asked after my friend;" she has not forgotten you, Fred.

Oh, woman! woman! what has thou not to answer for? Should not you and I now be perfect hermits—very anchorites—models of perfection and consistency, but for these women? We certainly should. Had Galileo been endungeoned—forgive the word, for discovering the beauties and perfections in the heavenly bodies of woman, instead of pouring over, or rather under the stars, he might have borne his incarnation with some degree of patience; for the recollections with which they would have stored his memory, would have diverted him in this solitude.

Dost remember our remark when we saw the finger of this star-gazer under the glass-case in the Laurentian Library at Florence, pointing towards the sky as if there were an eye in the tip of it to discover more stars, and fresh beauties in the heavenly bodies? Dost remember, I say where we would have placed it? Why, in the tribune to be sure; and made it point upwards to the "statue which enchants the world," and to the glowing Venuses of Titian behind her! Could Galileo, Tycho Brahe, Kepler, Newton, or the whole host of star-gazers, have bestowed their observations on more "heavenly bodies" then these?

In the centemplation of the Medicean Venus, Bianchini, her countryman, need not have gone to the expense of Campani's famous telescope to discover her beauties. Her proportions may be measured without the use of the Roman palm. Eh, Fred! they are open to the naked eye; and such transcendent ones they are, that they almost put us out of conceit with those forms, which have only the advantage of flesh and blood over them, while they are so inferior in every other respect. To be sure this advantage is to *ours* sometimes, and so I must be charitable and silent.

But to our friends of a *certain* class; by this you know I designate those who have no character to lose; while my uncertain class consists of all the people of reputed reputation, who fill up the great portion of society, and have done nothing so glaring as to be "sponged" out of the canvass—YET—God knows what they may do!

The green *vis-à-vis* rolls about as usual; the eternal claret-colored barouche is everywhere; the yellow-bodied chariot, with brown arms on its pannels outside, with which the arms within began to vie in point of complexion; (I suppose these kind of fair ones, for want of other heraldry, think themselves entitled to the arms of their noble supporters;) the piquant *demi-fortune*, decorated with

brass outside and *in*; the brownstriped cab; and a variety of other vehicles of our acquaintance are still grinding the dust of the Park, and dashing through the mud of M'Adam in the streets. You see I designate each lady by her "carriage."

Time has made some inroads on all of these; for five years are not to be passed over with impunity. And as to some other of our fair acquaintance, who once graced our famous coterie in —— Street, I am sorry to say, Fred, they are sunk down to the *pavé*—or below it—into the grave.

Does not this make you tremble?

Repent in time, Fred, pray do. If you can't do it all at once, do it by degrees; wipe off a sin a day, by devoting one hour to repentance; but mind and don't make the balance at the bottom still the same, by committing another at night. Don't score up a sin on the debtor side for every one you knock off on the credit side. Take your hour before breakfast while your clarretty headache is upon you; you will find it more adapted for the purposes of repentance than any other part of the day.

As to my uncertain class, strange to say, there is not so much vicissitude as in the other. They still go on in their own jog-trot way. Certain liberties and licences allowed, certain limits, which must not be passed, but which you and I, Fred, know are pretty extensive. The boundaries of the preserves are large, and as long as you pursue your game, and catch it according to the custom of the manor, why you may go on shooting till the end of the season without the fear of destroying the cover.

A few more *parvenues* have rolled up the hill of society on their golden wheels; and some of those whom we left at the top of it, have rolled down pretty quickly by the magic of "seven's the main" at ——'s.

Lady T—— and her set, and the Marchioness —— and her coterie, keep their ground. They take great liberties with each other's characters; but as neither of them are believed, why their "scandal's praise," as their praise would indeed scandal.

Time has also brought forward on the tapis some new maids and some new-made wives. Among the latter, a fascinating *artiste*, whom so many of us sighed after in vain, and who was only to be won as a wife, is married, and an excellent wife they say she makes. I hope nobody will spoil her!

She rolls about town in a carriage of her husband's invention, without traces, like that in the famous picture of Aurora by Guido.

Would you or I, Fred, knowing what we know, trust our wives, supposing we had any, in this wicked town of ours, anywhere, without traces? I should think not!

A blooming baby, a coquette in embryo, smiles from the carriage-window, a proof that "Time" has done something for her; for the old gentleman makes as well as mars. As to our men; our own set go on just as usual, intriguing with each other's mistresses; triumphing and triumphed over by turns. They do say that wives are not entirely excluded from the general exchange, but you and I, Fred, are by far too good-natured to believe it.

Dorrington, whose passion you know was ambition, was very nearly being *bien monté*. He had attained the last step of the political ladder; had scrambled up to the very summit of the mountain; was on the point of being the premier, when he was suddenly tumbled to the bottom, with no other benefit from his elevation, than that the bruises he got in his fall were as great as though he had actually gained the apex of his wishes.

He is now laughed at by all parties; and so much for ambition!

Lumley, whose madness, for all these passions are madness, was patriotism, embarked his all, first in the emancipation of South America, and next in the cause of the Greeks. He was obliged to fly the one for fear of being assassinated by the party he supported, and hung judicially by the one he opposed; and has returned home from the other, without a guinea in his pocket, and with but one hand to take it out if he had; and so much for patriotism!

Granville, the prudent, as he was called at Eton, the miser as he was called at Oxford, who wished that his fingers had been endued with a Midas power, has still continued to make wealth his god. He married a woman worth her "weight in gold;" and if his wealth could have found out any guard that could have preserved it as securely as her own ugliness ensured his wife's fidelity, it would have been secure indeed. But a great speculation in the funds, by which his enormous wealth was to have been quadrupled, failed, and left him nothing of his god Midas but the "ears;" and so much for prudence!

Now, if these be the ends of ambition, patriotism, and prudence, is it not clearly proved that a life of pleasure is the best?

Don't you remember how our worthy sires, Heaven rest their souls, and bless their memories for putting us so early in the possession of our estates, were wont to point out these three worthies as examples for our imitation; but I always knew we were wiser than our fathers; didn't you, Fred?

So much for them; and now, Fred, for the pith of my intelligence, the marrow of my letter. Put all that has gone before aside, as we do the rubbish that has accumulated in Rome, before we come to the tesselated pavement—the veritable soil of the mother and empress of the world. Dost remember Trevor? There's a bathos! it puts you in mind, no doubt, of Juliet's nurse,—

> Your love says like an honest gentleman,
> And a courteous, and a kind, and a handsome,
> And, I warrant, a virtuous. Where's your mother?

and you say, What the devil has the empress of the world to do with our quondam acquaintance Trevor? Why, neither more nor less, Villars, than that this vascilating fellow who always rowed in our wake at college, and followed our example at an humble distance on the Continent, has married a woman that deserves to be empress of the world, if every body had their deserts.

But nobody has, else we should not be where we are; for we are certainly deserving of a throne or the gallows, though for the life of me I cannot tell which; and at present we have attained to neither of them.

But to this—yes, I will call her woman—but such a one, Villars!—one of my *peculiars!* How shall I paint her to your imagination, Fred? For it is too gross of itself to conceive such a creature without the aid of my pen; yet, by my soul,

It strains me past the compass of my wits

to describe her with any degree of justice.

Indeed, what artist would be equal to the task, even with the aid of all the colors which nature has so kindly furnished for the imitation?

The hand of Raphael could not have depicted her dignity; Corregio's mingling collors could not have portrayed her softness; the glowing pencil of Titian would have failed in her complexion; and Michael Angelo himself could not have done justice to her form.

As to her eyes, her complexion, her hair, I cannot attempt to describe them; her first impression, and I am yet speaking from first impression, is like that which we both felt on our first contemplation of the Via Sacra and San Pietro,—so overwhelming that the mind has no leisure for details.

It is precisely that kind of beauty which defies analysis; a beauty arising from a complete whole; a beauty which, as Hogarth says, "is seen and confessed by all; yet, from the many fruitless attempts to account for the cause of its being so, inquiries on this head have almost been given up, and the subject generally thought to be a matter of too high and too delicate a nature to admit of any true or intelligible discussion.

Imagine, if thou canst, Milton's Eve mingled with Byron's Gulnare; Desdemona's delicacy with Juliet's voluptuousness; in short, imagine something that thou hast never seen, and thou may'st perhaps hit upon something like Agnes—Trevor—for Trevor is her name by *law;* that d—d law which confines a woman to one man, and gives him the power of monopoly over a magazine of charms that might have furnished beauties for a hundred of her silly sex. Then she is as unlike the rest of them in manners and mind as she is in person; she acts from feeling instead of form; sets ceremony at defiance; thinks for herself; patronises talent wherever she can find it; takes up the cudgels in defence of the oppressed and injured; detests affectation, and in the midst of fashion, is the creature that nature intended her to be, and that poets have made her.

She has imagined a world of her own, and peopled it according to her imagination; and strong in the native elegance of her own mind and person, astonishes the little minds of those who tread in the steps, or follow in the train of their predecessors.

She owes everything to the creative energy of her own mind. She acts and thinks, and speaks for herself; she is original; and all the masters in the world, with their arts of mannerism, and dancing, and music, would have only spoiled her, as the wretched plasterer Maderno destroyed, with his frippery, the magnificent design of Michael Angelo.

Now is it not a shame that such a creature should be thrown away upon such a fellow as Trevor?

And how did he get her? say you. Why, they danced together at one of the Prince's juvenile balls, when children; they met together again at the Dashington university quadrilles, which you and I, like fools, used to despise, knowing that the head of the college was only preparing pupils to turn them over to our hands in a greater stage of maturity, He handed her into the carriage at her presentation; he danced through the first season with her; was opposed by her relatives, and carried her off. This is all I can find he ever did to obtain her.

The fact was, the lucky rascal was the first who whispered the word love in her ear; her heart and soul had already been attuned to the sound by her own nature and the nature of her studies. Trevor was thrown in the path at a critical moment; to do him justice, the fellow has enough ardor while a pursuit is new; the injustice done him by her relations roused the demon of opposition-generosity in her mind; her imagination filled up the outline of a hero, which Trevor had given her, with qualities of her own creating, and she became his. Will he keep her? what think you?

I say, Fred, I was just thinking what a glorious mistress such a creature would make! What a companion for the bright moonlight nights of Italy! What a form to contemplate in the placid bosom of the Larian lake! Then, the sensations she would create in the saloons of Florence! the comfort at the little albergos! Altogether——— But I must not think of it, I suppose. By-the-by, don't pester me any more about that affair of the Lago Maggiore. The stipend I have left and secured, is enough to repair any injury in the world; and, besides, all the happiness which she enjoyed, and which I taught her to enjoy, ought to be put to the credit side of account; and as to the trumped-up deception of our anonymous gentleman, I set it at defiance, as I will himself the first time I meet him; all you have to do is never to disclose my real name, and all will soon be well. The most ruffled sea grows calm at last; and so, farewell."

CHAPTER XXI.

Agnes in vain attempted to shut her eyes to a conviction, the truth of which was hourly pressing upon her mind, and agonising her heart. All her early anticipations were disappointed; and when mentioned, were treated as romance by the very person who had encouraged her belief in their reality. Yet all this was done kindly, or carelessly, without an idea of giving pain: nor was there an expression which he uttered, that the most fastidious could have construed to unkindness. Trevor's was a careless, rather than a bad heart: there was a buoyancy of spirits, a hilarity of mind, a joyousness of disposition, and a gentlemanly attention to his wife, that would have made an indifferent observer pronounce him the best husband in the world.

Had Trevor's conduct been absolutely unkind, Agnes was not a woman to complain; as it was, there was nothing she could fix upon in particular. It was only the general alteration of his manner, the general break up of all her hopes, and the complete disappointment of all her anticipations.

Her house filled by the parties which Trevor thought it necessary to his rank and consequence to entertain, she exerted herself in public to the delight of her guests, while she pined in secret over her disappointments, to the entire detriment of her happiness.

She felt it hard to resign all those hopes of domestic joys which she had so long indulged, and upon which she had almost lived, from the moment she felt she had a heart to appreciate them. She was like a person awaking from a dream of happiness to real misery, and who tries to sleep again, that the

Amabilis insania, mentis gratissimus error

of the youthful imagination might continue, though the reality had passed away.

The short period of happiness, too, which she had experienced at Trevor Place, during the first few weeks of her marriage, when she had indeed realized all her anticipations, and had felt her heart full of happiness, rendered her present position and circumstances the more distressing from their contrast and their recollection.

Her feelings, thus thrown back upon themselves, her heart was in a perpetual state of expectation and disappointment—her eyes would overflow with tears in the midst of apparent gaiety; sighs would intrude themselves in the song with which she delighted her guests; and melancholy disturb her in the vortex of pleasure and dissipation, into which she was plunged by the habits of Trevor.

Perhaps the greatest misery she experienced during this trial of her heart, temper, and understanding, was the daily proof that Trevor afforded by his conduct of how wrong an estimate she had formed of his character. To feel the object of our love daily sinking in our estimation, is one of the greatest trials to which human affection is subject. But the mind and heart of Agnes, in spite of her warm feelings, were too well regulated to love long where she could not esteem; and as this latter feeling diminished, her love naturally became less, and her disappointment lost some part of its bitterness.

But where under such circumstances was her heart to find an *appui*—where was she to turn for consolation? To Lady Emily, her only friend, being her husband's sister, she could confide nothing of her present feelings. Lady Emily had observed, and remonstrated with her brother on the imprudence and folly of his conduct; but she was afraid to sympathise with her friend on such a subject, both on her own account as well as on account of her brother.

In the mean time the heart of Agnes could not remain unoccupied; it was filled with all the best and noblest feelings of human nature, and with a longing after the gratification of these feelings which knew no bounds. It was indeed a heart filled with loving-kindness to all her fellow creatures; and disappointed in her own hopes of happiness, she sought for means to add to that of others. She had her almoners in all directions in search of misery and misfortune; and where her purse could not relieve, her sympathy consoled the sufferer. Many were the deceptions practised upon her kindness, and disgraceful the ingratitude with which her bounty was often returned; but though she regretted this, it did not alter her mode of conduct. That her bounty was too indiscriminate, she was made sometimes to feel severely; but because there were some unworthy objects by whom her kindness might be abused, she saw no reason why she should neglect others who might be worthy of all she could do for them.

Such a heart and mind as hers, were naturally and keenly alive to the admiration of men of genius; and her house and fortune gave her great opportunities of collecting together all the talent that was afloat in town. She even sought a relief for her disappointed feelings in a perpetual round of society and dissipation; and attempted to lose the thought of her disappointment in the gaiety of the dance, in the pleasures of conversation, or in the delights of music.

In the mean time, Leslie had cultivated his intimacy with Trevor, till he had become perfectly the *ami de la maison;* and had so adroitly managed his conduct and conversation, as entirely to banish from the mind of Agnes every former idea she had entertained of his character, except that of his repentance for an error arising from momentary passion and irresistible temptation; for such was the color he had contrived to give to the only affair of which Agnes had any knowledge, through the medium of her husband.

Trevor was himself such an admirer of Leslie, that he had exerted himself to the utmost to overcome the prejudices of Agnes against his admission to their more select societies; but he could not accomplish this till the art of Leslie and the representations of her husband convinced her, that he had been belied and most unjustly treated by the opinions which had been disseminated with respect to his character. This was precisely the right chord to touch with Agnes: to be once convinced that anybody had been unjustly treated, was quite enough to make her generous heart rise in his defence; and so, unhappily, it proved for her with regard to Leslie.

With such feelings, it may be imagined he was not idle in improving his position. He devoted himself to condense and display all the talent he possessed—put forth all his powers of entertainment—gave accounts of romantic adventures abroad—and interspersed them with occasional and natural regrets, that he had as yet found no heart that had possessed the power to make him look for happiness at home.

He perceived the gradual subsiding of affection which the conduct of Trevor created; he affected to sympathise with her by such expressions of general feeling, as she could not openly, though she might secretly, apply to herself—while he was the principal means of leading Trevor into all the dissipation in which he indulged, and which now frequently made him a stranger to his own home for days together.

Upon these occasions, Leslie would contrive that

Agnes should hear him reproach her husband for his absence; and mingle these reproaches with representations of the happiness he was throwing away. Trevor was sometimes surprised at this conduct of Leslie's, but always set it down to his wish to be well with his wife—and in this he was not deceived.

While Sir Robert was thus making his way in the saloon, La Tour was not idle in the servant's hall. Flounce had already received the subtle Frenchman into favor; and listened to his compliments and flattery, till Mr. Watkins was quite banished from her heart; and never came in her way without being "twitted," to use his own expression, with the superior politeness of Monsieur La Tour.

By these means many of the private actions of Agnes became known to Leslie: her hours of solitude were laid open to him: he learned that there were melancholy moments in her dressing-room that ill accorded with her gaiety in public; and he read, or thought he read in all this, the coming on of that vacancy of heart which is so often the prelude to another passion.

He felt the game he was playing was secure as to the diminution, if not the eradication, of her love for Trevor; but there was an uprightness about her conduct—a noble sincerity of demeanor—an innate modesty that shone in all her actions, that gave him no clue to hope any thing farther. All he calculated upon was the necessity which he thought such a heart had for loving somebody; and he trusted as the one passion died away, another might spring up in its place, and it was his determination to leave no effort untried to make himself the object of it.

For this purpose he was determined to use every art. That all was fair in love was his favorite creed; and he was indeed one of those who

> Would not turn aside from his least pleasure,
> Though the world's force were armed to bar his way.

He looked upon the world as only filled with temptations, opportunities, and pleasures, that they might be enjoyed free from all restraint by those who had boldness enough to seize them.

> He, like the birds, great nature's happy commoners,
> That haunt in woods, and meads, and flowery gardens,
> Would rifle sweets, and taste the choicest fruits,
> Yet scorn to ask the lordly owner's leave.

In pursuance of his scheme, and the more closely to draw the meshes of the net he was spreading round his intended victims, he apparently used every means to hide the dereliction from the duties of Trevor, and did all in his power to excuse the carelessness of the conduct he exhibited. This told well for him with both parties. It confirmed Trevor in the idea that Leslie entertained a true friendship for him, while it raised him considerably in the opinion of Agnes.

Leslie, however, well knew that what he concealed in the drawing room, was freely communicated by La Tour in the steward's room; and he was likewise well aware that Flounce was made the confident of many of the actions of Trevor, which no female tongue could long withhold from communicating to her mistress.

Indeed, La Tour generally accompanied these pieces of information with such little informations of his own, on such treatment of such a wife, as excited the indignation of poor Flounce, who thus became an innocent tool in the hands of these schemers, to undermine the little esteem for her husband, which still remained in the bosom of Agnes.

CHAPTER XXII.

About this period, Leslie received letters from his friend Villars, hinting at a subject upon which he had been forbidden to write, and to which Leslie himself never alluded, unless upon absolute compulsion. It appeared to be the only subject upon which those friends did not write freely and unreservedly; nor could any thing clearly appear from the dark hints which were now and then scattered over their letters, upon the only point on which Leslie seemed to be peculiarly irritable.

In some of his epistles Villars had also ridiculed the idea of Leslie's growing passion for Agnes; had taunted him with questions as to the measure of her attraction; and had desired to know what there was so peculiarly attractive to attach a heart such as his so long to one object, while the passion appeared to be any thing but mutual.

Sometimes he would launch out in praise of the new beauties which he had discovered in his travels since Leslie's return to England; complain of his own want of success, which he attributed to the absence of his able coadjutor and leader; and tempt his return by his description of women whom he knew to be particularly suitable to the inclinations of Leslie.

At others, he would describe the despair of this signora and of that contessa; and even ventured once or twice to hint, that his sudden departure from Florence and his continued absence was attributed in the higher circles to his unsuccessful attempt on a certain principessa, and his dread of a *rencontre* with a principe *marito*, who was notorious as the best shot and the most expert swordsman in Italy.

In his letters, Villars again urged strongly his return to Italy; and expressed his wonder that a woman who seemed so inaccessible, should detain him so long in cold, drear England, while the fertile plains and blue skies, and warm hearted women of Italy, were all ready to welcome him with open arms. To these remonstrances, Leslie replied by the following epistle.

LESLIE TO VILLARS.

"You ask me, Fred, what in the name of wonder there is, or can be in this dear delicious woman, thus to seize upon the heart and fancy (for my heart is, for this once, absolutely in the adventure)

of such a capricious devil as I am; and faith, without seeing her—without conversing with her—without knowing her, it would be difficult to tell you.

You know I fell in love with Lady D—— for her eyes; with Mrs. S— T—— for a lock of her hair, which hung so carelessly and luxuriantly on her snowy shoulders, that, if you recollect, I told her I no longer wondered at the title of Pope's famous poem! Mrs. C—— attracted me by the roundness of her arm; and her cousin, by the prettiest little foot in the world, which excited my curiosity by peeping so daintily under her flounced petticoat at one of those *soirees* which the blind dowager used to give for the benefit of those who could see better than herself. You know one of my odd fancies— for some how or other I have had a great many odd fancies about women—was the mole which by contrast rendered the neck of the once charming little countess so much the whiter. In short, I have been in love with a hundred different beauties, or oddities, about their persons; but here, Fred, I am in love with the whole; for all the beauties which my luxuriant imagination can think of, and you know it is luxuriant upon these subjects, seem congregated in the person of this woman. Like Shakspeare's Rosalind, she seems to combine the various beauties of various women in her precious self.

Then her mind—her imagination—her feeling—her sensibility—all combine to render her still more charming.

She feels, she lives, she breathes in poetry; she makes a romance in real life; and gives an indescribable interest to all the nothingness of existence. Wherever she moves a charm seems spread around her. She is like one of those creatures in a fairy story, beneath whose feet one can imagine the beauties of nature to spring up spontaneously; one whose step and presence might be supposed to clothe a desert with flowers, and whose touch could draw a living spring from a barren rock.

What a being to inspire with love! what a bliss to know that such a creature centred her principal hopes of pleasure and of happiness in you! Eh, Fred, wouldn't it be real Elysium to lie in such arms as hers; to repose upon such a bosom as hers, to read in her eyes your own passion reflected?

But I madden at the thought; I could dip my pen in lava—living, flowing lava—to give a vent to my imagination, when it dares wander this way; and when does it wander in any other direction? But I must be calm, or the mine I am laying for another will be sprung by my own hotheadedness, and blow up myself.

Is it not strange, Fred, that with all this sensibility; all this warmth of temperament; all these capabilities of loving; that she should be prudence personified:—that her delicacy should place a rubicon around her, which Cæsar himself would not have dared to pass?

Is it not strange, that a creature of such passions —for that a creature of high passions she is, her eye leaves no doubt; such an eye, Fred, so dark, yet so clear; so bright, yet so soft—is it not strange, I say, that she should be ever so watchful over them, as to suffer no tell-tale devil to peep out, and designate the moment to attack her; and how to attack her, I cannot for the life of me tell. She is a perfect puzzle. There is not another woman of her feeling in the world, that by this time, either by accident or design, had not afforded a dozen opportunities which such a daring devil as myself might have turned to some account. But here, Fred, I am foiled—foiled and puzzled. There is no prudish withdrawing of hands, and no affected casting down of eyes; no coy avoidance of my society and conversation; but quite the contrary; and yet not one peg of comfort on which to hang a hope.

Thou knowest how I have talked myself into the good graces of the fair Parisiennes; how I have waltzed myself into the tough hearts of the Germans, and the pudding souls of the Dutch; how I have sighed myself into the arms of the voluptuous sex in Italy and Spain; and you and all the world know that I have hitherto been anything but unsuccessful with our fair countrywomen here.

You know, Fred, how closely I have studied the sex in all countries, and thought that I knew them thoroughly from the slipper to the tiara; from a heart-string to a stay-lace. Yet here I am puzzled by a girl—a mere novice; with no more knowledge of the world than a cold, heartless husband could give her: and husbands are afraid to teach their wives too much.

What a pity, Fred, to make such a woman a wife! What a pity, in such a soul as hers, to make love nothing but the cold performance of a duty! What a mistress has here been spoiled by the absurdity of those human ties which fetter the heart; and would convert the gratification of our most natural feelings into a crime! Did nature bestow upon us passions warm as those with which my heart is now beating; and pleasures glowing as those which my imagination is anticipating, only that we should enjoy them, as the dancing bear does the little liberty his keeper allows him—in chains?

Marriages, says some sage or fool, and sages and fools are very much alike, upon the same principle that two extremes generally meet, are made in heaven. Why the devil then didn't they keep them there? and not come to trouble our earth with them; for my part I am very willing to wait till I get there for a taste of matrimony; arn't you, Fred?

It is astonishing in what different ways different people speak of this same marriage: some call it a curse, and some a blessing; but I rather think him in the right who described it as a feast, in which the grace was better than the dinner.

Marriage appears to me, Fred, in the light of one of those expensive locks which teaches the thief where the treasure lies, by the very care that is taken to preserve it. It is the lock and not the treasure that forms the temptation; and every mechanic in that line sets to work to invent a picklock that shall *undo* it.

I say, Fred, what a devilish clever fellow he would be, and what a fortune he would make, who could become a Bramah in the matrimonial lock, and invent some security against the violation of its *wards*.

Lord, Lord, what a run such an article would have with the poor devils of husbands.

Imagine a shop of this sort opened in the vicinity of St. James's, and think with what eager-

ness our friends from A to Z—for the whole alphabet would scarcely furnish initials enough for the husbands that you and I would give their ears for such an invention—would flock to purchase it. The only hope of a poor batchelor on the *pavé* would be, that the great demand might create a scarcity, or induce the sale of a spurious article, which, by giving the *marito* an imagined security, might make the way in some instances, a little easier.

I wonder whether Trevor would purchase. No, no; for his Agnes is so high up in virtue, that even all his neglect of her never creates the shadow of suspicion in him; she is so much above it, that it never enters his imagination to suspect her virtue.

What country is that, Fred, where the women were wont to designate the number of their paramours by fringed tassels at the bottom of their garments, and wore them as marks of honor? That was a sensible country, Fred, and the women must have been good judges of trimmings, and most certainly appreciated us properly. I suppose Shakspeare had some notion of this place in his head when he makes Juliet talk of luring the

Tassel-gentle back again.

And yet I would not have this Agnes one of them for the world. No; by my soul, I would not. 'Tis the very virtue that opposes them that adds to my desires—that adds fuel to the flame which is consuming me. It gives dignity to her beauty, and makes the accomplishment of my wishes a fit object for the ambition of such a heart as mine.

Why do you pester me with the Lago Maggiore still? Are they not satisfied with what I have done? is it not noble? is it not handsome? is it not sufficient for one with twice her rank and pretensions? is it not enough that I have taught her once to be happy, and in that lesson has she not learned to be happy again? How unreasonable these devils are when we have done with them! aye, and before too! As to the claims you speak of, you know I laugh at them. There is none but the cursed scribbler of that cramp-hand written letter that can witness against me, excepting yourself. Nay, you are not in the secret, for it was all effected through him, whoever he may be; and though I have nothing to trace him by but a few lines of his hand-writing, I trust I shall find him; and when that is the case, he shall most surely rue ever having crossed the path of Leslie. You say she threatens to follow me. Well, as she imagines me making the tour of the Ionian Islands, and as my last and only letter was despatched to her by our friend Lumley from the shores of the Adriatic, and as that was a kind of death-bed letter, I am afraid that she will have a great deal of trouble to very little purpose.—I say, Fred, if she be determined to leave the neighborhood of the Lago, can't you persuade her to go to the cottage at Benace? Change of scene, they say, is particularly good for mental invalids, and the malaria, so prevalent in that part of Italy, might cure her entirely of her particular complaint.

What devils these women make us!

You reproach me, Fred, and say I was wrong in cultivating this woman's mind and manners, and accomplishments, and all that—and then—but I won't repeat the—then. Look, Fred, at the Borromean Islands, the Isola Bella, and the Isola Madre, were they not originally barren rocks without a leaf or tree! and are they not now planted with groves of cedar, cypress, citron, and orange-trees? are they not studded with grottos and adorned with terraces! and do they not smile with flowers? and who, my dear Fred, has a right to enjoy these beauties! who has a right to pluck these flowers and bask on these terraces? Does any body in the world deny the right of him who took the trouble of their magical creation? Well, Fred, and if this be true, and I find a heart and mind barren as these rocks, and am at the pains to cultivate them, take the trouble of planting flowers, and increasing or creating beauties—ergo;—but, as usual, my arguments are so plain, that I leave the ergo to yourself.

Then you will tell me in reply, to pursue the allegory that I was not content with cultivating the Isola Bella, but must turn it into the Isola Madre. But that came naturally enough. La Tour tells me 'tis time to dress to go to dinner at Trevor's. Away then with every thing else to the winds. If she flies, let her fly in any direction but towards England. She is not aware of my real name. But more of this when Agnes is not in my thoughts and heart; when she is there, there is room for nothing else until another comes, and then——well—then—farewell!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

In the midst of dissipation into which the habits of Trevor, more than her own inclinations, plunged her, Agnes however, shrunk from the heartlessness of the world by which she was surrounded. The entertainment of her imagination, however—mere enjoyment, even though of an intellectual character, was not sufficient for such a heart as hers. The gratification of her affections was absolutely necessary to her happiness; and having once tasted the sweets of a mutual and a virtuous passion—having once enjoyed that truest bliss that human affection presents in the love of a husband, even her ardent friendship for Lady Emily was insufficient to satisfy the longings of her heart.

In the midst, therefore, of society and of gayety—in the vortex of dissipation—in the splendor of fashionable existence—and in the contemplation and enjoyment of the wit, talent and genius which her circle presented—she felt a void; her memory would travel back to her early anticipations, and live again over those short-lived scenes of vivid happiness which characterized the few first months of her marriage, and a sigh of affectionate interest—of conjugal love—of desire for her husband's society, would escape her bosom. Her eyes would travel around the splendid apartments in search of Trevor—her thoughts would seek him; but the

sigh she sent forth—the wish that was half uttered —the thought that flew after her husband, was all in vain. Her dream was over—she awoke—and could not sleep again. The light of day had dissolved the fairy visions of her fancy, or rather the darkness of night had come over the brightness of her morning.

The period at which we are now arrived, of the union of Agnes and Trevor, was precisely that period in which a husband may, if he pleases, confirm the affection of a wife. Passion cannot last for ever; and the care of each party should be, as their warmer feelings cool, to see that they are replaced by that esteem—by that tender friendship, which, when the result of mutual love and confidence, is the purest, most lasting, and most pleasing affection of which the human heart is capable.

The husband who values his own future happiness and the affections of his wife, should watch this period with the greatest anxiety. He should be careful, very careful, that the change from the lover to the husband be not so marked that she perceives or feels it; and above all, he should beware of permitting her heart to derive any of its principal enjoyments from any other object than himself.

It is the conduct of this early period of marriage that generally confirms the happiness or misery of a married couple throughout their lives; of course we are here speaking of people who have been united from motives of affection. As to those who marry from other motives, as they have never anticipated any high species of happiness from each other, so can they never experience the misery of disappointment; and it is a melancholy reflection on the imperfection of human passion, to think that these marriages of interest and convenience generally produce less unhappiness than those formed upon purer and nobler motives.

Leslie, who, as he himself said, had literally studied women till he understood them from a "heart-string to a stay-lace," well knew that the precise period at which a woman's heart is most vulnerable, is that in which its first and warmest feelings are beginning to experience that soul-sickening disappointment which the commencement of neglect in a beloved and newly-made husband creates. Her mind draws comparisons between the ardent lover and the indifferent husband. Her imagination and feelings have been excited, and her tenderness awakened without being exhausted, and their legitimate object by his coolness repressing their expansion, the heart is too apt to find an *appui* elsewhere; and there are always a sufficient number of specious libertines abroad on the look-out to take advantage of these feelings in a woman's heart, by an appearance, or the promise, of keeping up the romance which her husband's increasing coldness is melting so rapidly into dull reality.

Leslie was calculating upon all these operations in the heart of Agnes, and was ever on the watch to supply the deficiencies which the increasing absence of Trevor created. He was careful, too, by his conversation, to keep up the romantic turn of her mind, and so dressed up his sentiments and language as to impress her with an idea that there was something like congeniality between them: and all this his travels, his adventures, his observations on human life, and his powers of description, enabled him to do so well, that Agnes began to wonder at the character he bore in society; and, from being the silent listener whenever his character was stigmatised with the epithets which it deserved, she became, with her usual indignation at the injustice of the world, his defender.

Leslie heard this, but it gave him no pleasure. He was convinced that while she could thus speak of him, though it was thus to defend him, that her heart was untouched—that she saw and felt nothing more in his assiduities than his friendship for her husband—and that the only step he had obtained was to lull her suspicions of his real character to rest. This was, however, one point gained; and, like the spider, who sees the fly pretty near the web, but still not likely to be speedily caught, he rested in silence to watch her movements, lest the slightest motion of his should alarm her, and betray to her eyes the snare he was preparing for her.

He would then turn his thoughts to Trevor, and invent new temptations to lead him from his home. This was, unfortunately, no very difficult matter. He was led entirely by the set in which he lived —a set of dissipated profligates of which Leslie was the head; and it was Trevor's glory, goaded on by the example and the ridicule of his companions, to show that he was too choice a spirit to be spoiled by marriage.

Thus he began to play and to drink deep—established a little *menage* with a newly-arrived opera-dancer, to whom Leslie, having known her in Italy, had given instructions to throw out all her allurements, and for whom Trevor's temporary *penchant* was increased by the occasional expressions of praise and of envy which escaped from Leslie and the rest of his set.

There was one thing, however, in this pursuit, that Leslie did not anticipate; which was, that he became so enthralled in the chains he was forging with so much labor for Agnes, as to find the success of his scheme absolutely necessary to what he termed the happiness of his life.

He had calculated that his own indifference would enable him to escape, as usual, with impunity. That which, in the first instance, had been a mere captivation of his senses, had however become, by the contemplation of the loveliness of her mind, as well as the beauty of her person, an overwhelming passion of his soul; and he saw that he must devote his whole energy and experience to accomplish wishes, which he felt would be his torment if they remained ungratified.

Incapable of that generous passion which would have sought the happiness of its object by the sacrifice of his own feelings, he had not courage to permit all the excellencies which surprised him—all the loveliness which excited his admiration—to induce him to attempt the conquest of his own vice rather than her virtue. He saw but one method of relief, and that was by the attainment of his object, the accomplishment of his end—the destruction of Agnes.

When first he saw her and marked her for his own, the momentary gratification of his senses, and the additional triumph over that sex which it was

the glory of his life, to flatter and despise—to elevate and to subdue, was all that he contemplated ! and judging from others, he imagined that the carelessness of Trevor, united with her own warm feelings and his insidious arts, promised him an easy task.

He soon found, however, that he was egregiously mistaken in his calculations, and that such a woman as Agnes Trevor was not to be won by the manœuvres of a hacknied libertine.

Leslie had studied the female heart well, but he had studied in a school where there were few such examples as that presented by Agnes; and by those he had never yet been attracted. He had been accustomed to press every passion of the female bosom into his service, and make them subservient to the success of his schemes. He had owed as many of his *bonnes fortunes* to the envy, jealously, and vanity of the sex, as he had to their love. He had studied all the weaknesses of the female mind and heart, and had profited by them; but he was unaware of their strength, and he never before met with such a mind and heart, as Agnes possessed.

Many women would have been thrown into his arms by the carelessness of such a husband as Trevor, out of mere revenge for the slights with which he insulted her. But Leslie soon discovered how superior Agnes was to all those feelings to which, with other women, he had owed so much of his success; and in spite of the restraint it put upon him, he acted accordingly, till he found himself so wrapped up in the object of his wishes, that he devoted his life to their accomplishment; and with unwearied industry, he determined to pursue his scheme of first winning her heart, and then her person.

He had not, hitherto, however, dared to breathe a word that could lead to a supposition of the existence of his passion, although his heart was boiling over with the ebullition of the sensation she excited; he saw that a premature disclosure would ruin all, and he had trained his feeling so completely as to prevent any betrayal of his wishes, till he saw the hope of their near accomplishment, or till he saw their expression would not irremediably offend.

As the friend of her husband she had first received him, and as her *own* she could not refuse to acknowledge him, after the many instances he had given of his sympathy with her distresses, and after the many attempts to call back her husband to a sense of his duty, for which she gave him credit.

She had heard much of his libertine character, and that had put her on her guard; but from her actual observation, she had no evidence of its truth, and her mind was secretly inclined to believe that he had been belied.

She admired his talents, delighted in his conversation, and was often induced to regret that they were not more worthily bestowed in making some woman happy as a wife, instead of rendering so many miserable, as it was reported he had done, as mistresses.

Sometimes she would rally him upon his determined insensibility to the sex. Upon these occasions he would sigh and say, that if she knew all, she would not deem him so insensible as he was represented; then he would abruptly break from the subject, as though it were one that was painful to his feelings, till at length she felt fully persuaded taat he loved, but loved unhappily.

This idea was precisely that with which the insidious Leslie had wished to impress her; and it was no sooner conceived, than every trivial circumstance tended to confirm its truth in the mind of Agnes.

This feeling created something like sympathy for him; he had sympathised with her in her distress; it was but natural, nay, but just, that she should sympathise with him in return.

He knew this, he calculated upon it, and he was not mistaken; and he knew the power of sympathy to soften the heart, and particularly the female one.

Such an idea, too, invested him with a character of deeper feeling than any for which she had yet given him credit. This at once, in her eyes, diminished the other blemishes which were attributed to him; for, unfortunately for her, with Agnes, "feeling covered a multitude of sins."

She began to believe him the victim of many stories that were untrue, that had been disseminated to his disadvantage; and as this idea gained possession of her mind, her native generosity took his part; and her just indignation against the scandal to which he was sacrificed, made her think it a duty to rescue such a man from the odium which was attached to him so unjustly.

Perhaps, too, the wish would sometimes cross her mind, that Trevor had been such a being—that Trevor had possessed such sentiments as those, which Leslie so well knew how to express in a manner that was precisely suited to her romantic notions.

Her memoryrecurred to all the early fancies of her youth, when her imagination occupied itself in anticipating her future life, and in dressing up the actions which were to fill it, and the characters that were to perform them, according to her own wishes, or to the books she had read.

She recurred to her school-day fancies of a hero, careless of danger, braving difficulties, gay, generous, and daring in any and every thing that gave

> Hope of a pleasure, or peril of a grave.

As these old fancies crowded upon her mind, she could not help investing Leslie with those attributes.

His conduct as a soldier; his pre-eminence in society, which even his enemies were obliged to acknowledge; his talented conversation, and his superior manners, were precisely calculated to strengthen this idea, which gained ground rapidly in her mind, from the moment that she attributed the stories that were propagated against him to the score of calumny.

Then the incipient regret that she had not met with such a being earlier in life stole over her mind; but that was as quickly banished by the idea that he loved, and loved somebody that was insensible to his passion.

Then arose the question in her own heart, and a dangerous one it was,—Can this be possible?

Then came the restless curiosity to know who the fair one was that could penetrate such a heart as his was said to be. Her mind's eye ran over all the females of their mutual acquaintance; canvassed their personal and mental qualities to ascertain which was the most likely to have subdued him. But here she was completely at fault; none of them seemed likely to be attractive to a mind so confessedly fastidious as his. One was too commonplace; another was deficient in wit; a third, in person; a fourth, wanted that grace which she knew he considered indispensible; and a fifth, who possessed every grace, wanted a soul; and that was a requisite which he had a thousand times declared more attractive than either mental accomplishments or personal beauty.

By degrees, this anxiety to discover his secret became literally a disease; it tormented her day and night.

"Could I discover it," said she, "I might be of service to him; I might repay the debt I owe him, by rendering him service for service."

She thought, too, that few could be insensible to the many qualifications he possessed, that were so likely to make him agreeable to any woman whom he chose to select.

She began to watch him norrowly with this view; marked his countenance when he addressed a female; try to discover by his manner to whom he was attached—but all in vain; all were treated alike by him, though he generally regulated his manners to the characters of those he was addressing. Thus, with the lively, he would burst out into his usual sallies of wit; with the sentimental, he would sympathise; and with the grave, talk with the stoicism, if not the wisdom, of a Seneca. But, whenever he quitted any party with whom he was conversing, be would immediately retire alone to some corner of the room, and appear to ensconce himself in his own thoughts—and to wrap himself up in the dreams of his own imagination.

As time wore on, her curiosity increased till it became painful, and with it her interest for the man whose conduct had excited it.

Several times was she on the point of soliciting his confidence in the hope she entertained of being able to serve him; but this her innate delicacy prevented, by which Leslie was disappointed. This was precisely the point to which he wished to bring her; and he trusted to his own management to let sufficient escape him to make her feel that it was she, and she alone he loved, without making any explicit declaration; or under such circumstances, should his passions hurry him into it, he still trusted so to contrive, that she should have to blame herself, and not him, for any knowledge she might obtain of the real state of his feelings.

He had marked her curiosity, and gloried in the interest he had excited; but he yet dreaded the effect of her supposing herself the object of his love. This he felt must not be known, till he was much farther advanced; till he was assured of her heart, though not of his ultimate success.

He knew that a declaration to a married woman must either rob him of hope for ever, or give him reason to hope for every thing; for he had never met with a married woman who would permit the knowledge of the passion of a man, and see him, that she did not, sooner or later, become all he wished to make her.

His great object now was, that she should know or guess at his passion; but he had the utmost difficulty to accomplish this. Her delicacy afforded him no opportunity of even hinting at it He had contrived to convince her that he loved somebody, and to excite her sympathy at his imagined unhappiness; but no distant hint—no remote inuendo—and farther he dared not venture—served the purpose of conveying to her mind that she was the object of this love.

With all the liveliness of her imagination and feeling, she had no spice of coquetry—she had no particle of vanity; and never had entertained that wish for conquests, by which so many females, both married and single, are influenced, from the mere triumph of making them.

To have known that any man truly and involuntarily loved her, when there was no possibility of a return, might have excited her pity: but any expression of such a passion, would have been treated with indignation,

Leslie saw all this, and felt how far, how very far, he was from his object. He saw this, and cursed the obstacles that crossed his path, because they were of a nature that he could not surmount by any of his usual means.

Determined, however, to try if he could discover whether he was entirely indifferent to her, he tried to excite her jealousy by marked attentions to other females; but though she watched him, he saw that it was merely with the same view that she had done so before, without feeling farther interested in it. Completely puzzled and mortified, he would now have given up the pursuit, had only his pride and his usual wish for conquest been concerned. But to feel a passion so violent, that it was preying upon his heart; to feel this for the first time in his life, and for the only woman whom he was pleased in his vanity to think he could not have possessed with half the pains that Agnes had cost him, was too much for him. The idea irritated him; the continual sight of her beauty inflamed him; and he determined to continue the pursuit, and to devote his life to its accomplishment.

To this pursuit every facility was given by the conduct of Trevor, through whose invitations he almost lived at Trevor House. The husband found him a most convenient preventive against any arguments of his wife; and she was glad of his society, as it in some degree amused her husband when he was at home, and she herself felt a real pleasure in its enjoyment.

Leslie was thus upon the most intimate footing. he came and went without announcement: he undertook a number of things which Trevor neglected; at her parties he almost did the honors of the master of the house during his absence, and completely established himself in the good graces of every other part of the establishment; while La Tour, by his flatteries, his presents, and his promises, knew every thing that Flounce could tell of the *intérieur*. Yet, with all these advantages, he made no progress beyond that already detailed. He had done all he could do, as things stood at present; and nothing could enable him to move one step in advance, except conveying to her the knowledge

of his passion, and this he determined at all events to do.

But how, was still his difficulty: for it is not in England as it is in some other countries, where, without having thrown off the robe of virtue, they wear it so loosely, that it tempts every recreant hand to pull it aside, and where no proposal gives offence, provided it is made *d'une certaine manière et d'un air bien comme il faut.*

He found, too, that he had again miscalculated, in supposing that the dissipation which he encouraged, and in the course of which she saw plenty of examples of a conduct very different from her own in wives similarly circumstanced, would relax any particle of those principles which were so strongly imprinted upon her heart.

All the effect this mode of life had, was for the moment diminishing her regret at the disappointment she had experienced in Trevor. It relieved her mind from dwelling too intensely upon the disappointment, and enabled her to meet the fate of a neglected wife with indifference, since she saw that the husband was so unworthy of preserving her affections.

She soon, however, felt still more severely the vanity of the life she was leading. It disgusted her more and more with those heartless forms and ceremonies of society, which seemed to preclude the enjoyment of any thing like real friendship; and Emily being now absent, and her sister incapable of appreciating these sentiments, the only advantage Leslie gained, was that of being the friend to whom she sometimes unbosomed herself upon these general points of opinion and sentiment. This was the utmost extent of the confidence he enjoyed; and so delicious did he find its indulgence, that his passion was often on the point of bursting from his heart to his lips.

It was in these conversations, in which she indulged pretty freely in her animadversions against the heartlessness and selfishness of the world, that she sometimes lamented the fetters which form and ceremony has placed upon the real feelings of human nature, and the insensibility that they tended to create; upon this subject he would often lead her to talk, in the hope that she might afford some opening for himself to pursue it farther than she intended, so that the blame of some distant hint of the state of his feelings might rest with herself and not with him.

He would represent the superior pleasure arising from the gratification of those passions which are unmixed with the sordid baseness of the world, and unalloyed by the chilling forms and laws which cold mortals had prescribed. Would launch out in general terms against the prescriptions and prejudices of society; and illustrate these general principles by quotations from some of our best poets, or by examples of those whose hearts had been broken by an adherence to them.

Such discussions as these held with a woman, whose heart was all feeling—whose passions had rather been increased than controlled by her education, and who prided herself upon her enlarged and unprejudiced notions, were apt to be now and then carried farther than the very strict propriety would allow, particularly when led by one so artful and so insidious as Leslie; who really, in spite of the ardor of his passion, had patience enough to attempt winning her heart atom by atom; and to recollect, amidst the fervor of his feelings, that the stone had at last been worn away by the water that fell on it only drop by drop.

Once, when a conversation of this nature had gone to the utmost extent, he dared to press it; he ventured to allude to the delights of what he called the intellectual union of Alfiery and his Principessa, of Byron and his Guiccioly. But her indignation that the superior spirits of the age should degrade and debase their own sentiments by *liasions* which set morals and propriety at defiance, and thus encourage those inferior talents to imitate the vices of genius who were incapable of its excellences, soon convinced him how wrongly he had calculated upon this point.

Not all his sophistry of sentiment—not all his talk of the communion of souls—the union of intelligence—of spirit meeting spirit—could for a moment blind her to the broad fact, that all these feelings degenerated into baseness by such an intercourse as that to which Leslie had attempted to give the character of nobility; and he saw that if such a mind and heart as those of Agnes were ever seduced, it must be with her eyes open to the wrong she was committing, and an understanding perfectly alive to the guilt of her error.

It required all his tact after this conversation to remove an indefinite impression which it had left of the laxity of his principles upon these points; her proneness, however, to find apologies for any thing that seemed to emanate from feeling, enabled him to attribute what he had said to his enthusiasm for genius, and she became satisfied.

In large parties, Leslie of course, as the intimate of Trevor, found many opportunities of conversing with Agnes more alone, in fact, than he could in the morning in her own budoir, where there were two or three morning visiters. For who has not felt the solitude one may create in the midst of a crowd when unattended to by the multitude, but wholly engrossing and engrossed by the one dear object of our wishes! But this was not enough for Leslie, because he saw it was not enough for Agnes. In conversations between themselves, every sentiment that was expressed must be his own, and he must be accountable for it; but in conversation of a more general nature, he had the art of starting and conducting topics, so that these sentiments were elicited from others, and by this means he obtained the power of watching the effect upon her. On these occasions, too, he had the opportunity of showing his own superiority, as well as reserving to himself the power of supporting or combating the opinions which she repressed He therefore induced Trevor, or rather Mrs. Trevor, to institute little suppers after the opera and the French play, to which only the *élite* of the talent of the day were invited. The guests were, indeed, chosen for genius more than rank, although those in whom these two qualities were united, were never absent from these entertainments; which might for the strife of wit and intellect vie with those *petite soupers* given by the niece of Voltaire, and which were graced by the conversation of Diderot, D'Almbert, and the other geniuses of that age, which is so well described by Marmontel in his Memoirs.

Leslie was the life and soul of these parties; he

made himself up for them—read for them, and studied for them, and gave vent at night to all the information, all the wit, and every thing else he had collected in the course of the day; and as he generally led the conversation, he contrived to make all his ammunition tell, and to pass off the effect of absolute study as the result of spontaneous effusion.

Nothing could be more exciting to a mind imbued with an enthusiastic admiration of genius than these suppers. It was perpetual excitement that Leslie wished to keep up in the mind and heart of Agnes; and he generally contrived to be so pre-eminent in this intellectual gladiatorship, so prominent in these tournaments of wit and intelligence, as to leave an impression upon the mind of Agnes that lasted long after the "good night," which he had perhaps whispered in her ear immediately after some pre-eminently successful sally, upon which, like a good actor, he had contrived to make his exit with effect.

He thus contrived never to leave her, but with a favorable impression of his talents and accomplishments; and La Tour always contrived that Flounce should have some tale to his advantage, with which to keep up this impression in her dressing-room.

CHAPTER XXIV.

With this sentiment, and with a mind and heart that stopped at nothing that could tend to the accomplishment of any wish he had formed, it is not to be wondered at that Leslie should do every thing he could to allure Trevor from his home; and, unfortunately for himself and Agnes, Trevor was addicted to many propensities which kept him abroad, and was easily led to the adoption of others, which were not naturally his own, by the "choice spirits," as he designated the set by whom he was surrounded.

Wine, cards, every thing that produced a temporary excitement, by turns, occupied him; and in moments of reflection, the consciousness that he deserved reproaches from his wife, would make him imagine them in her looks, though she did not utter them; and this frequently kept him absent, as well as his dissipated habits.

Just at this period, too, his sister was compelled to visit a rich aunt in the country, whither Hartley had followed her; so that Trevor had lost the only real friends he possessed, and was deprived of those who pointed out to him his errors, and the manner in which he was trifling with his happiness.

In the mean time, Leslie was the constant attendant at Mrs. Trevor's parties, from the large route down to the select supper; and every interview increased his passion for her, and strengthened his determination, by some means or other, to make her his.

He felt that he was gaining ground in her esteem, and that she probably appreciated his talents; but further than this, his tact taugh him he had as yet nothing to hope. He calculated, however, on her husband's neglect, on her youth and inexperience, and upon the romantic turn of her disposition, at some period or other operating in his favor, and he went on.

It was after one of the parties at Trevor House, when, either from a greater degree of excitement, or from his rapidly-increasing passion, Leslie had devoted himself even more than usual to its fair hostess, that he lingered the last of the gay assemblage, and still seemed unwilling to depart. She had been more than usually animated; and had never appeared so surpassingly lovely in the eyes of Leslie, as she had that evening.

He had spent hours with his eyes scarcely removed from the contemplation of her form and features; and his imagination had become so inflamed by the ardor of his wishes, that his passion was more than once on the point of bursting from his heart.

He had hung upon every accent that fell from her lips—he had watched every movement of her graceful form—he had contemplated her charms so intensely, that he was almost maddened by the idea of how very far he still was from the accomplishment of his object; and from the remembrance, that a being who had thus the power to engross his whole soul should belong to another.

With this idea, in addition to the other passions by which he was agitated, a deadly hatred to Trevor sprung up in his heart.

His imagination pictured this being as Trevor's fond and indulgent wife—gall and wormwood were sweetness in comparison with this idea; and he rejoiced that his arts had thus so far estranged him from his home, that he had seldom the mortification, or, as it was now become agony, of seeing them together.

Carriage after carriage was announced; party after party rolled away; yet Leslie could not bring his mind to the sepparation. He seemed rivitted to the spot. He had never before felt how necessary the possession of Agnes seemed to his very existence. He had never before felt the powerful hold she had obtained over his imagination; and he inwardly swore that *nothing* should prevent the accomplishment of his end.

As he felt the fire of her soul-sparkling glance which fell upon him, it seemed to light up an inextinguishable flame, which nothing but possession —full possession—could quench.

Once or twice be almost determined to wait till everybody was gone, declare his passion, call to her mind all the neglects and injuries she suffered from Trevor, and throw himself upon her mercy.

He had yet, however, sufficient presence of mind to perceive, that though she treated him kindly she was not yet ripe for such a declaration at this. He felt that it was to hazard all; and ALL was too much for him to hazard. Yet, at the moment that he touched her hand, in his almost breathless adieu, and felt the effect of that momentary collision through all his veins, again did his impetuous heart rush to his throat—again did the words of passion rise to his lips. But he still had sufficient command over himself to refrain, though his eye spoke volumes of master-passion of his soul.

He rushed down the staircase, and leaping into

his cabriolet, applied the lash to his spirited horse, and felt a momentary relief in the daring dexterity with which he threaded the maze of carriages which still remained.

Who that has passed an evening with a beloved object, has not felt that vacum of heart which occurs at parting! This is terrible, even where the love is mutual: how much more so must it be, when we madly love a woman who is in the possession of another, and the hour comes when we must not only quit this object, but leave her in the arms of one whom an illicit passion has made a rival!

This harrowing thought pressed upon the mind of Leslie. He hated Trevor for having possessed himself of Agnes; despised him for his neglect of such a woman; and laughed at the idea, that by estranging him from his wife, he was in part allaying the fever of his own feelings. Trevor was not yet at home. He might be at the club in time to prevent his returning till the morning; the idea that they might not meet that night was a temporary alleviation to the tortures of his heart, and he dashed down to St. James's street, his horse all foam; and his groom, fearless as he was in general, panting from fright at the hair-breadth turnings, and close approximations of the cabriolet to posts and carriages in its progress.

Leslie's quick eye caught a sight of Trevor, rushing down the steps of his club-house.

He started from the cabriolet. "Trevor, Trevor, my boy, whither so fast?"

"Home, or to the devil?" exclaimed Trevor: "though I think I am running away from the latter in quitting this d—d place, where the devil and all his imps seem to have taken up their lodgings in those cursed dice."

"What, man, has lost a few guineas; and art grumbling with Fortune, by way of courting her favors?"

"A few guineas! Thousands would not pay my losses of these last two hours; and as to Fortune—changeable they may say she is, but to me she seems immutably the same slippery jade, and I could find in my heart to renounce her for ever," said Trevor.

"Tush, tush, man!"—Is this Trevor? the gay Trevor—the envy and the example of us all? Nonsense: come back, try your luck again; and take my voucher, Leslie's voucher, that thou shalt prove this jade as capricious as the rest of her sex, whom both of us know never refuse their favors to those who persevere in their pursuit.

"Come, come;" and Leslie pressed his return.

"No, Leslie, no; I have already lost more to-night than I can conveniently pay," said Trevor, despondingly.

"Pay—Trevor!"—and a thought flashed across the ever-plotting mind of Leslie. "Pay! And have you no friend—no Leslie, with an unincumbered estate, and a round sum at his banker's; and is it necessary for him to say that any sum he wants is at Trevor's command?" and he grasped his hand with all the apparent fervor of the sincerest friendship. Trevor hesitated: Leslie pursued the advantage—drew his arm within his, and they re-entered the club-house.

"Come, come, a thousand or two may redeem all that you have lost," said Leslie, "and give you your revenge upon the winners. Bring some Champagne—no, no, Burgundy, Burgundy. Come, man," in a half whisper, "don't let these fellows see that you are annoyed. They are cursed impertinent, prying fellows, with all their civility; and are the first to tell some scoundrel of an editor of the losses of men of spirit."

The Burgundy was brought; and bumber after bumper followed each other down the throat, and into the head of Trevor. Leslie wrote a draft for five thousand, which he forced upon his friend, taking a simple memorandum of the transaction, and then led him up stairs.

Below, there was mirth, and conversation, and laughter. Politics, scandal, all the topics of the day, were discussed over the little elegant suppers and superb wines which were served in this emporium of luxury. But up stairs all was silent. Nothing was heard but the quick rattle of the dice on the box, before they rolled silently on the well stuffed green cloth; the fall of the cards upon the tables, the passing of counters, and now and then, to an attentive listener, the but half-suppressed execration of some infatuated wretch who tried in vain to turn fortune in his favor.

This, however, was but seldom the case. Every one here was too well bred to give any other expression to feelings of this nature than that which was conveyed by an increasing paleness of the cheek, the knitting of the brow, or the stern compression of the lip, whose nervous irritation, however, too plainly bespoke the agitation of the heart within. But perhaps the most striking expression of this feeling is exhibited the attempt to smile off the agony of a loss, when the lips refuse to obey the wish of their owner, and curl into an expression of bitterness instead of mirth, and, becoming pale, too plainly speak the pang experienced by the heart beneath. The Burgundy, the five thousand, the sight of the dice, the table, and the bank, recalled the inclination of Trevor to play; and he placed himself beside Leslie again to tempt his fortune.

Leslie, who was never a gambler, threw only for small stakes. His object was not gain; money was nothing to him but as it aided him in the principal pursuit of his life. He had, unfortunately for himself and others, plenty of it for this purpose and perhaps the dread of diminishing such a powerful auxilliary, as much as any thing else, had deterred him from courting the excitement of the gaming table.

As a man of pleasure and of observation too, he had not failed to observe how little this pursuit tended to his ideas of enjoyment; and when he cast his eyes around the table at which he was now seated, and observed the careworn and anxious features of young and handsome men of his own age, he congratulated himself on the pursuit of objects which left no such traces on his own cheeks, whatever they might do on those of his victims.

The play had on this evening been more than usually deep, and the bank as usual very successful. Just at the moment, however, of Trevor's reentrance, fortune had seemed inclined to change, and some large sums had just been won by the players. This, together with the Burgundy, and

winning two or three stakes, encouraged Trevor to proceed with spirit, or, in other words, with desperation, for the spirit of a gambler is desperation.

Imagining fortune to have really changed in his favor, and unwilling to balk it, urged on, too, by Leslie, he placed a large stake on the table, and threw out; he doubled it on the next throw, and again lost. Thinking the bank again in favor with fortune, and the next thrower being notoriously unlucky, he again doubled his last stake; and, to make more certain, removed it to one of those portions of the table that were appropriated in favor of the bank. The money was scarce removed, before the unlucky thrower, for the first time in his life, threw in; and the last of Leslie's five thousand was swept away to increase the hoard of the presiding Plutus of the place.

Leslie, whose eye had watched every movement of Trevor with something of the avidity with which a spider contemplates a fly that has ventured in his web, had kept a mental account of his losses; and, going to a side table, had written and changed another draft, the amount of which he slipped into Trevor's hand.

The players were now dispersing, excepting a few of the most desperate. Some of them sought in another bumper of champagne, or *ponche à la Romaine*, to drive away the agony of repentance at any rate till the morning. A few hours of oblivion were cheaply purchased at the expense of their senses; and, alas! how many have awakened from this oblivion but to find ruin staring them in the face, and to seek a more permanent forgetfulness in poison or a pistol!

Trevor hesitated; but Leslie throwing a large stake on the table and winning it, he derived fresh courage; and at this moment, the dice being in the hands of the gentleman whom the bank had declared to be the last thrower for the night, several desperate losers emptied their note cases on the table. Trevor, by a sudden impulse, almost convulsively grasped the whole of the notes just given him by Leslie, and, putting his hand on the table, seemed ready to place the whole at the hazard of the die. A momentary, and almost involuntary hesitation, appeared to cross his mind. Every eye was upon him: he saw that he was observed; and the fear of ridicule which was his bane, came over him, and he dropped the whole upon the table.

From this moment his eye was involuntarily fixed upon the thrower, with an intenseness of which he was insensible. This gentleman had a very trifling stake upon the table; and Trevor could have cursed him bitterly for the insensibility with which he gathered up the dice, and turned them once or twice between his finger and thumb, before he put them into the box.

Large stakes were on the table; the last hopes of several players lay before them to be decided in an instant. The bank itself could not view the chances unmoved. All was silent; excepting the hard breathing of two or three who were on the point of being ruined, while they were yet too inexperienced to conceal their feelings. Trevor's heart beat audibly. Leslie, as he quietly and calmly contemplated the scene before him, heard it beat; and his intemperate thoughts wandered to the heart against which, at that very moment, it might have been beating with pleasure; and he smiled scornfully and hated him.

The gentleman who held the box, and who was a pale, elderly person, with a kind of sleepless eye that spoke the continuity of his nightly vigils, and whose few silvery hairs, and quiet placidity amidst the wreck of fortune, bespoke the experienced gambler, still playing with dice, as though in mockery of the intense anxiety by which he was surrounded. Trevor's lips almost moved to the curses which his heart dictated.

Then again would the delay create a hope; and a sudden feeling came over him, that if the thrower would call "*à sept*," he would win, almost forced him to prompt the call.

At length the box was held up. Every eye was intently fixed upon the thrower; every heart beat high with mingled fear and expectation: the impression was too intense to admit of such a quiet feeling as that of hope.

"*A cinq*," uttered the placid old gentleman; out rolled the dice listlessly on the table. "*Onze*," cried the croupier; the bank swept in the heaps of money which by this throw had become their property; and Trevor had the double misery of knowing that his anticipation of "*à sept*" would have won, and the loss of his very large stake into the bargain. Of the amount of this last stake he was not aware, till the banker unfolded the notes before he gathered them up; and every one was astonished at the extent of the sum.

As his money was swept away, and he turned from the table, a sickness came over his heart that made him lean, for a moment, on Leslie for support; but he rallied instantly, and calling for pen and ink and more Burgundy, he gave Leslie his acknowledgment for the money he had lent him, and swallowed bumper after bumper so quickly, that his brain was soon insensible to the loss he had sustained, and to the anticipations of his repentance.

As their carriages were gone, Leslie desired one of the waiters to call a hackney-coach; into this he led Trevor, he convulsively grasped his hand at parting, calling him, in the little articulation which the wine had left him, his "*best friend.*"

Leslie directed the coachman to the house of Trevor's opera dancer in ——— Street, saw him drive away, then casting his eyes up to the dark clouds which were rolling rapidly through the skies as though they were chased by the fast-coming morning, he laughed aloud, and strode away from the steps of this "temple of ruin," hugging himself with the idea that he had mounted another step of the ladder he was determined to ascend. Trevor would be in his power: perhaps a succession of such nights might—what might it not do? Thus thought Leslie: but then, it would not be to her mind, to her heart, to her inclination, that he owed her. Well, no matter; she will be *mine!* And in that idea every other was absorbed.

As he strode, rather than walked, down Piccadilly—for his passions, though in abeyance to the motives which had induced him so calmly to watch Trevor, were not allayed—his mental colloquy was interrupted by a herd of those poor, desolate, and houseless wretches, who way-lay the midnight passengers in the neighborhood of the clubs with clamorous mendicity, or with disgusting invitations.

Tired of their intrusion, and to get rid of their importunity, Leslie scattered a handful of silver on the pavement, which soon occupied the attention of the whole of the miserable crowd save one, who, as the gas-light gleamed on his countenance while in the act of throwing the money, fixed her eyes upon his face, and, quitting the hope of sharing the spoil with her companions, continued to follow him. She was evidently in a state of extreme intoxication and her talk was a mixture of maudlin invitation and of dreadful imprecation. Two or three times he was compelled to shake her from his arm, and attempted without stopping, to prevail upon her to desist; but as she still continued to persecute him, he turned upon her, and threatened that, unless she quitted him, he should be compelled to place her under the care of the watchman.

A frantic laugh was the only reply she made to this threat; a laugh that seemed to thrill to his very heart. He attempted to pass on, when she suddenly seized his arm, and, with a frightful energy, before he could summon nerve and strength enough to resist, she dragged him to a lamp-post, and placed him in such a position that the light gleamed full upon her countenance.

She appeared to be of the lowest order of the lowest prostitutes. Her dress was covered with mud, and half torn from her shoulders in the struggles or quarrels of intoxication; a red handkerchief but half covered a breast which hung loosely over stays that seemed to be unfastened behind; she wore a dirty straw bonnet, decorated with a gaudy-colored ribband hanging at the back of her head, while a cap attempted in vain to confine a profusion of hair that hung dishevelled, matted, and tangled, over her naked shoulders and neck. Her eyes glared wildly, with a mixed expression of intoxication and passion; her cheeks were swelled and bloated, and tinged with a purple hue.

"Tell me," said she, in a voice which agitation rendered almost inaudible, "tell me, I say; answer me—"

"What?" said Leslie; "what want ye woman!"

"I want a man—no, no, no; not a man—" her voice for a moment softened—"a villain! a damned villain! a—a—a—:" the struggle between her memory and intoxication seemed to impede the utterance of her thoughts. Leslie attempted to free himself from her; this roused her in a moment.

"Tell me," exclaimed she, "is not your name—" she paused, seemed to be diving into her memory for something which had escaped her, and then suddenly thundered out—"Leslie? aye, that is it, Leslie? Is not your name Leslie?"

Astonished, half alarmed by her frantic vehemence, thrown off his guard by the suddenness of such an unexpected appeal, Leslie, in the hurry of the moment, answered—"No."

She gazed at him for a moment, as if in doubt. Her energy seemed to have sobered her; and as the effects of intoxication passed away, the expression of recognition which had before so strongly characterized her inquiring glance, was no longer visible. She dropped his hand; and, with an imprecation, exclaiming, "I am mistaken," turned suddenly up one of the courts in the neighborhood, and was out of sight in an instant.

Leslie himself could not account for the indefinable sensation which had made him, almost involuntarily, deny his name. The whole circumstance had been so sudden, so unexpected, that she was out of sight before he could sufficiently recall to his senses either to question or pursue her. Yet it was in vain that he attempted to banish the occurrence from his memory; he therefore turned home, to forget that and himself in the temporary oblivion of sleep.

CHAPTER XXV.

Leslie's dreams this night were disturbed. He knew not why a circumstance that might have arisen from mere accident should make such a deep impression upon his mind—but so it was. Whether the excitement of the whole evening had rendered his heart and brain more sensitive than usual, and that this occurrence had acted as a climax upon his excited feelings, he could not tell; but he passed a night of feverish dreaming. His eyes were scarcely closed, when woman appeared to him in all her native loveliness. First it was Agnes, with all the charms that had maddened his heart and brain. He saw her moving among her guests, the loveliest of them all—the "observed of all observers"—the admiration of his sex—the envy of her own; and yet insensible to any thing but the idea of giving pleasure, and of meriting the admiration she excited. Then his loose imagination pictured her under other circumstances, as warmed into a corresponding passion to his own. Her eyes, as replying to the passionate glances with which his own dared to gaze upon her charms. Every look seemed to speak a yielding voluptuousness that made his heart ready to burst from his bosom with its beatings. Suddenly she became transformed. All her traits of beauty were turned into deformities; her mind was madness; and the beautiful Agnes Trevor, by gradual metamorphosis, seemed to become the wretched prostitute who had arrested his progress in the street.

He started from his sleep. Cold drops of perspiration stood upon his forehead; every limb was convulsed, and his firm nerves trembled. He quitted his bed, and sought in the action of his body some relief for his mind. But it was in vain that he altered his position—in vain he paced his apartment—in vain he seized on a book, in the hope of diverting his attention. For the first time he felt the inefficacy of his own resolution; and longed for the day as much as the murderer, who thinks himself haunted by his victim, and that nothing but the light of morning, "with its pale and ineffectual fires," can drive the spirit to the dark shades which it has quitted to torment him.

However innocent a life may be passed, there are few of us that have not experienced such a night as this; few of us that, in the darkness of soli-

tude, have not trembled, and wished that light which was to dissolve some distorted picture of the imagination, and again to usher us into activity and society.

In these dark hours of solitude, the memory paints the past, and anticipation illustrates the future, with colors peculiarly prominent—colors that vanish as the light of day presents other objects to our contemplation, to divide our more serious thoughts with the various occurrences of life.

Leslie, who laughed at superstition, and at religion, which he called by that name, had never, till this moment, experienced such sensations as those which now agitated him, and a hundred times he cursed the folly that made him wait so impatiently for daylight. At length it came, rendering indeed "pale and ineffectual" all the gas with which his square was illuminated. He threw up his sash to welcome the appearance, and the fresh morning air seemed to act as a soother to his brain. He threw himself on a couch, and slept quietly till La Tour entered his room, who was surprised to find his master on the couch instead of the bed: but, like a prudent valet, he made no observation on so unusual a circumstance. Leslie was still in some state of excitement; his mind had not yet recovered its proper tone; he could not sit down coolly to his morning avocations of billet-doux, and other "trifles light as air," in which it was the pride of his philosophy to pass his life.

Agnes was gaining such a paramount interest in his heart, that for the first time he began to feel that love, which he had hitherto only dissembled or played with, would prove in verity the tyrant which poets have made him.

The announcement of Trevor, as the name accorded with every thought and with every feeling of his soul, gave a fillip to the state of mind in which he found himself. It was a name associated with the most sanguine wishes of his heart; and though the bearer of it, from being the possessor of the woman he adored, was hateful to him, yet he was welcome, as forming one of the stepping stones to the accomplishment of his wishes. In short, every thing connected with Agnes had a charm about it that was irresistable to his imagination.

Trevor's countenance was pale, and his step unsteady. His eye seemed to bend beneath the glance of Leslie; he felt himself a debtor for more than he could conveniently pay; and what man, placed for the first time in this situation, can face his creditor unabashed?

After the first salutations, a few curses at the wine, and at the club, Trevor asked Leslie if he knew how much he had lent him.

"Oh, no!" said Leslie; "I keep no account of such trifles: there are your acknowledgements, and my banker's draft will tell if they are correct; for you know I never change a draft for myself at the cursed place."

The hastily and drunkenly-scrawled acknowledgments, were produced, and on being examined, were found to amount to several thousands more than Trevor had anticipated.

After the acknowledgements had been produced, and the amount ascertained, Trevor confessed his inability to discharge them without having recourse to means which would add greatly to his losses, and indeed even those means were not immediately available, as the "law's delay, and the insolence of office," were to be conquered before the cash could be forthcoming.

Leslie had gratified that dislike of feeling to Trevor which his passion for his wife had been gradually creating, by thus reducing him to ask a pecuniary favor. He had now another game to play, and that was the generous one, that should attach Trevor to him by the ties of gratitude as strongly as he was now attached by those of admiration.

"Why, my dear Trevor, what the devil ails you?" said he; "you look as forlorn and wo-begone, and as frightened at me as if I were some unfortunate dun, who had been knocking single knocks at the brass lion at your door for the past six months, and had been let in at last through the stupidity of your porter. What are a few thousands among friends?—There—there go the acknowledgements into my desk—call for them when you please—I have really more money than I know what to do with; and my only plague is, that my steward and my lawyer are perpetually urging me to put it out to interest—and now I will take their advice, my dear Trevor," assuming an air of cordial friendship. "I will put it out at the best of all interests, and will consider myself as usuriously paid, if my money enables me to prove my friendship for you."

Trevor would have thanked him; but Leslie stopped him with—"nonsense, man! what is the utility of money to such prudent, thrifty creatures as I am, if it were not that it enables us to supply the occasional wants of generous spirited fellows like yourself?"

There was a little satire in this remark that grated upon Trevor's ears; but this feeling immediately subsided, when Leslie continued; "But, Trevor, I am afraid you don't recollect that I was not your only creditor last night. That devil—— told me that the three last throws before my arrival at his cursed place were scored to your account. I must not leave you in his hands. So there, there's another draft—clear that score immediately; for I would not leave the character of my worst enemy in that fellow's hands for an hour for the universe. Pay him, and the devil will swear you are a god; but owe the rascal a guinea, and though you may have raised him from a dunghill to a palace, there is not an epithet in the whole vocabulary of abuse that he will not lavish upon you. So now, my dear fellow, au revoir, for I have schemes—schemes, my boy, that you know nothing of. So away, till the evening bring the hours of carelessness and champagne."

Trevor took his leave, lightened in heart, and impressed with more than admiration of the character which, like an *ignis fatuus*, was leading him to ruin; little thinking the schemes he had left him to meditate were against his own honor and the virtue of his wife.

Another step, thought Leslie, and began to toilettise, that he might be in readiness to meet Agnes in every street through which she drove. He really began to feel existence only in her presence, and he sought it every where.

It was the business of his life to ascertain all her engagements, and to follow or meet her throughout them all; he was generally in the way to hand

her from her carriage wherever she stopped—he was sure to be at Andrew's ready to point out the last new publications. He was at the side of her carriage in the Park, and the evening of course threw them together, from the circumstance of their moving in the same circle of society.

Strolling with the intent of watching her carriage in the line leading from Pall Mall to the top of Bond street, that great exchange of fashion, where one is sure to meet every body that is worth meeting, he was joined by one or two of the officers on guard, and by a young life-guardsman; and while they were discussing the high play of the overnight, and comparing notes as to winnings and losings, the life-guardsman suddenly exclaimed, "By G— here comes Slashing Nan; now, if she is primed with what she calls a flash of lightning, a pretty batch of oaths will she let fly at us."

Leslie's eye turned in the direction pointed out by the speaker, and to his almost horror, saw the same woman who had addressed him under such curious circumstances the previous night, and who had left such a painful impression upon his mind.

She was no longer, however, the furious being she had then appeared; she no longer strode along with rapid strides, but moved slowly and sullenly. Her dress had been temporarily repaired, but still retained the dirt of the mud in which she had been rolled overnight. Her bonnet was slouched down over the face. Her gown was tied up almost as high as the arm-pits, with a red sash, and the looseness of her waist proclaimed that there was no confinement of stays; one foot was slipshod, showing the heel of a very dirty stocking, and part of a petticoat quite as dirty peeped from under her gown; a Belcher handkerchief was tied round her throat, and an apology for a pair of gloves was upon her hands.

She approached the party; but looked neither to the right nor to the left.

"No," exclaimed the person who had pointed her out, "she is in the sullens—the flash is out of her—poor Nan is not up yet."

As she approached, Leslie half trembled; he dreaded her attacking him again the moment she came near enough to see his face; and though her knowing his name must have been merely accidental, yet in his epicurean system he had steered so clear of contact with anything like the contamination of prostitution, that he dreaded laying himself open even to the suspicion that he could be known to such a creature as that before him.

There was likewise in the presence of this unfortunate and degraded creature a feeling created in his mind approaching to dread, for which he could not account, and which was indeed utterly inexplicable to himself.

He was glad therefore to see that she passed them without any signs of recognition, and strolled on, perfectly unconscious of their persons, or of their observations on her.

When he no longer dreaded her recognition of him, Leslie carelessly asked his companion what he knew of her.

"Faith," replied the guardsman, "all I know is, that our men call her the 'slasher,' and that sometimes, when the blue-ruin has done its work, we have had her into the barracks, to give a few of us lessons in slang. The curious thing about her is, that till she is drunk, she is dull and sullen as you see her now, and is never, they say, heard to swear; but the moment the liquor mounts to her brain, she seems inspired, and utters rhapsodies, mingled with wit, obscenity and blasphemy, that, at the moment they proclaim what a she-devil she is, show plainly enough that she must have had a very superior education. By G—d it was but last night she puzzled the chaplain at his own weapons, and made him knock under."

Strange, thought Leslie, that men bearing the title and holding the station of gentlemen should admit even of the momentary society of such a creature as this! and little think those delicate creatures, those finished pieces of Nature's workmanship, that adorn society, that the hand which leads them through a quadrille, and the lips that whisper soft nonsense in their ears, have been within a few short hours prostituted to such purposes as these, and in contact with the most degraded creatures of vice and profligacy.

How few women know what men really are!

Still perplexed at her knowing his name, he determined to speak to her. He accordingly *au revoir'd* his companions, and forgetting even Agnes for a moment, followed in the same direction, keeping the object of his curiosity in sight.

As she went through the palace, and passed the sentinels and several other soldiers, she was greeted with some slang recognition from each; of these salutations, however, she took no notice, but walked on with an appearance of utter insensibility.

Leslie passed her, and looked full into her face, but she betrayed no sign of recognition—all was apathy. At length, arriving at a solitary part of the park, he suddenly turned and stopped her.

She gazed on his face unconsciously.

"My good woman," said Leslie, "do you know me? nay, don't turn your eyes away, but look at me steadily, and tell me if you know me."

The creature seemed to be called to a slight degree of consciousness; her vacant blue and glazed eye fell upon his features, then seemed to peruse his person, as the question had been understood; but it soon resumed its unconscious expression, as shaking her head, she said, slowly, and as though she had hardly the power of utterance, "No, no; how should I know you."

"Did you ever see me before?" continued Leslie.

Again the same unconscious stare, and a shake of the head, indicated a negative.

During this short colloquy, Leslie attempted to trace in her swollen and livid features something to guide him in the solution of the mystery; but the glassy eye—the sunken cheek, except when swollen by violence or intemperance—the livid brow—the streaks of carmine which still remained, rendering the death-like white of the other part of her face still more appalling and conspicuous, gave him no clue to the problem: all appeared utterly unknown. There seemed not to be a single recollection in his mind connected with the features before him, bloated and disfigured as they were by intemperance.

He again bade her look upon him, and asked if she knew his name; but still received a negative. Her look, however, this time betrayed impatience, and that nervous irratibility which was annoyed by a cessation from action.

He gave her some loose silver, and quitted her; convinced in his mind from this proof, that her utterance of his name on the preceding evening must have been the result of mere accident.

As for the woman, she received the money with an insensibility that seemed to betray almost an ignorance of its use; and without even any expression of thanks, pursued her way in silence. This colloquy had greatly relieved Leslie; and he laughed at the interest which he had suffered such a circumstance to create in his mind, and called himself a fool for the uneasiness which he had permitted it to give him during the preceding night.

He banished the whole affair therefore from his mind; and gave himself up entirely to the passion of Agnes, and to the scheme he was projecting for the accomplishment of his wishes.

La Tour was made acquainted with the whole of the transactions of the last night, as well as with the arrangements between his master and Trevor in the morning: this information, with certain little addenda furnished by the prolific imagination of the Frenchman, was immediately conveyed to Flounce, whose indignation against her master, which was continually kept alive by La Tour, would immediately induce her to carry the story to her lady.

Flounce had lived with Agnes from a child, and had therefore many more privileges than a common *femme-de-chambre;* but Agnes was very peremptery in stopping her, when in these fits of indignation against Trevor and of admiration of Leslie, she would trespass upon these privileges, by inveighing against the one and praising the other.

In spite, however, of these interdictions, and of her lady's anger, Flounce contrived always to say enough to leave a general impression on the mind of her lady of the imprudence of her husband, and of the generosity of his friend; and these impressions were not without their effect upon a mind keenly alive to everything that resembled nobleness of conduct, as well as to everything that tended to the abasement of the human mind. Those which were received in favor of Leslie, were likewise greately increased by the generous manner in which he always appeared to excuse the aberrations of Trevor; and by his never mentioning or alluding, in the slighest degree, to his own share in any of the transactions in which he was apparently so honorably implicated.

All these circumstances induced a dangerous confidence on her part, her former dread and contempt of his character was rapidly changing into admiration at the discovery of such unexpected qualities, her distrust was fast vanishing; and she felt esteem and friendship growing in its place.

Leslie marked, this and rejoiced: he saw although no direct way was open te the accomplishment of his wishes—to the gaining of her love; yet by these indirect means he might gradually attain his ends.

CHAPTER XXVI.

LESLIE TO VILLARS.

Fred, my dear Fred, congratulate me. I have spent the whole morning with her, and am to go to the Opera with her—to the Opera. And is this all, methinks, I hear you say? Is it the gallant, the successful Leslie, that makes this a subject of congratulation? After months of attendance, after the millions of sighs, and all the et-cetra of an ardent pursuit—it is come to this, that Leslie, the irresistible Leslie, thinks it matter of congratulation that he is to go to the Opera with a woman whom he has pursued for months? and yet so it is.

To go *tête-à-tête* with a woman to her box, is always a step gained.—It admits you to a kind of domesticity, which can never be had any where but in an opera-box, or a boudoir, or—somewhere else: and you know, Fred, the delicious public privacy of a box at our opera; a place where one may say any thing, aye, and do any thing, if people permit it. Eh, Villars?

Oh! Fred, Fred! with what a thousand recollections is that opera house associated! Do you think the groves of Arcadia ever witnessed so many vows as the painted canvass of that theatre? Do you think that the notes of the far-famed nightingale ever warbled over so many lovers as those of the Italian cantatrices have done, from Mara down to Pasta? or, dost think that any bower in the world, decorated with seats of sweet brier and roses (devilish uncomfortable seats, by the bye, unless the thorns are extracted,) and surrounded by myrtle and eglantine, ever witnessed so many yielding hearts and lovers' vows (both of them sometimes broken,) and other things appertaining thereto, as the lawyers say, as those boxes have, with their red silk curtains, calico linings, *chaises-longues*, and cane bottomed chairs! Depend upon it, Fred, in spite of romance and poetry that the opera-box carries it all in nothing. By the bye, Fred, never while you live have a looking-glass in your opera-box—I'll tell you why some other time.

Your poets may talk of Arcadian bowers, and beds of roses, and solitary groves, and nightingales; and may trumpet forth all the paraphernalia of a common-place pastoral; but give me an opera-box to make love in.

Don't you remember Mrs. D. F—— always said she should never have been guilty of her imprudence with H——, — imprudence! I love a woman's definition—don't you? it beats Johnson, doesn't it?—if her husband had never permitted her to have an opera-box; and this was so strongly impressed upon her mind, that her lover had actually formed the idea of pleading this dangerous indulgence of her husband in mitigation of damages; and would actually have done so, but that his counsel advised that in such case the proprietors of the opera might have a fair ground of action against him, from the mischief the *expose* might do the theatre. And yet Trevor himself proposed my ac-

companying his wife; therefore, whatever happens must be attributed to him—mustn't it?—Imagine me, therefore, domesticated in her box the whole evening, *bien niché*, as the French have it, behind the curtain; but though *niché*, any thing but a statue. And were I a statue, it would in her presence only be to realize a story, like that of Pygmalion; and Agnes would be the goddess of beauty, to infuse into me the life and fire and pleasure of existence.

Isn't it strange, Fred, that I, who know the sex so well, who have studied its weakness only to increase my own strength, and its strength only to reduce it to weakness, should, during such an age of close attendance, have made so little impression; Yet, so it is. As yet there is nothing but an incipient friendship; a kind of very Platonic sympathy, that has not even amounted to a spark, which one might hope to bellows into a future flame. But Platonic love does not answer our purpose.—Does it, Fred? 'Tis nonsense talking about all mind, all soul, and all that. The body must have something to do with it. As to your Platonics—

> So angels love—so let them love for me:
> When I'm all soul—so shall my love too be.

My only hope arises from her increasing indifference to the palpable neglect and notorious infidelities of Trevor, and from her increasing confidence in your humble servant. But whence arise this confidence? say you. Why, because I apparently do every thing to lead the misled Trevor back to his duty; and because she reads in my averted eye a sympathy for a neglected wife, without discovering the passion—the burning passion which glows beneath it—and which would leap out in my glances, if it dared, with all the fire and impetuosity of a volcano. But it is not time yet for the eruption.

Another point, too, I have gained; she thinks me ill-used by the world—imagines me libelled by what it says of me, gives me credit for the disdain with which I treat its accusations, and attributes my philosophy under all with which it assails me, to a consciousness of its being undeserved. She imagines me more sinned against than sinning.

These are her ideas, Fred; and her heart, like a knight-errant, has risen in my defence. She imagines me calumniated, and becomes my protector. She says she will judge for herself, by what she herself can see, (heaven bless her, and let her see a great deal more than she yet dreams of!) and never be led by common report. To excite her generosity thus, is a great point gained with one of her sex, for heaven knows how far she may carry it.

With regard to the one great affair, which is, alas, too much emblazoned in the heraldic records of gallantry to attempt concealment, we have touched on it but once, and I managed it in so masterly a manner, that she is quite uncertain whether I tempted the lady, or the lady tempted me, and has found an apology for the whole adventure in the inexperience of a boy, and in the ardent temperament of youth. Oh! Fred, Fred, whenever a woman can thus find an apology for one seduction in the natural steps which lead to ALL seductions, I am afraid her own is not entirely out of the cards. What think you? This, "I calculate," as the Americans say, is another step. By-the-by, I never tried an American. I wonder what sort of stuff the transatlantic maids, widows, and wives, are composed of. What think you, Fred, of a trip to New York, or Philadelphia, or Boston, or some other of their barbarous cities, upon a voyage of discovery in these matters of natural history? matters a little more interesting to mankind than the icebergs, red snow, reindeer, and Esquimaux, which decorate the pages of our North Pole voyagers. I dare say the arrival of two such fellows as we are among the Yankees would create about such a devil of a fuss among the women there, as the presence of Apollo did with the daughters of old Mysis, in the burletta of Midas. I much question, though, whether we should not do much mischief among these "calculating" people by being sent out as a bale of goods, with a valuation and invoice tacked to our tales; for I dare say love is no marketable commodity there, unless it could be sold by weight.

Yet I suppose women are much the same all over the world, the very reverse of their own mirrors, which reflect without talking, while they talk without reflecting; and I dare swear that this is the case, from the gazelle-eyed Persian, who gazes at the liquid portrait of her eastern loveliness in the clear waters of the Bendemir, to the Esquimaux damsel, who dresses her frozen locks by the reflection of an iceberg. But where the devil is my pen wandering?

> ——————What does it in the north,
> When it should be serving its sovereign in the south?

La Tour has just been to say that dressing time is at hand. Fool! does he imagine that I have done any thing else than watch the progress of time since I last parted from her? By my soul, every tick of my watch has been a comfort to my heart, as it brought me a second nearer to the time appointed for my seeing her again.

We dine a very small party in the little drawing room in Park Lane. Trevor, Agnes, and myself, proceed to the Haymarket early, that she may hear the whole of the opera, and indulge her enthusiasm for Mozart. How a little enthusiasm for music helps us on with them!

Trevor has a new flame, with a box *aux troisièmes*, who comes early likewise. He has confided his secret to me, and I have, most *unwillingly*, promised to find an excuse for his early absence from his wife's box. So now to dress, and then to dine, and then to the opera—the dear delicious opera—that great mart of every thing that is delightful in the world; the royal exchange for sighs, smiles, glances, *billets-doux*, and visiting tickets; the scene of so many commencements, and what is better, of so many *denouements* of intrigues; the resort and delight of all, from the grim old dowager who graced the circle of Queen Charlotte, to the languishing young lady of the last drawing room; from the connoisseur of music, to the amateur of "every thing;" aye, every thing, Fred, as you know full well, for of all the men I ever knew, Fred, you are really one of the worst. Ask your own conscience, now, and tell me fairly how many oaths have you sworn and broken in these very opera boxes? But with you, I am afraid that

Your oaths and your affections are all one.
With your apprael; things to put off and on.

Why don't you take example by me, Fred? Let me advise you to do so before it is too late. But I am going to my Agnes, and I have no time, no head, no heart, for teaching; and, therefore, you shall escape this time. I am so full of my anticipations, that I could say with Romeo—

My thoughts presage some joyful news at hand:
My bosom's lord sits lightly on its throne;
And, all this day, an unaccustom'd spirit
Lifts me above the ground with cheerful thoughts.
Ah me! how sweet is love itself possess'd,
When but love's shadows are so rich in joy!

And so good bye, Fred, till after the opera.

CHAPTER XXVII.

LESLIE TO VILLARS.

I AM just returned, Fred, from the opera, where I have gazed at nothing else, listened to nothing else; in short, have had eyes, ears, and tongue for no one else than this angel woman. Why is she not more of woman and less of an angel? then, perhaps—yes, then—and must we always reduce the scale of these creatures' virtues before we make them ours? Surely this is a defect in nature's composition, that the very thing for which these delicious women were formed, reduces them from perfection. Yet it is not nature that does this; 'tis habit, 'tis custom, 'tis the cursed conventional forms of the arbitrary few, whom from stoicism and insensibility have elected themselves lawgivers, and placed our natural passions in chains. And who are these Lycurguses and Solons of society? why are we to adopt the iropinions as fiats, and vetos, and boundaries, that we are not to surpass? and why are they so hard upon poor "womankind!" How, as I gazed upon this——but I will not call her names—and turned away with a sick heart to the contemplation of the cold dull scene on the stage! —how I wish for a Mephistophiles at my elbow whom I might have commanded to have sunk every thing before me into some yawning abyss, and have left me alone with Agnes Trevor on some silent, solitary spot, with no other light than the pale lamp of night, and no other eyes but those that stud the sky with stars. But unluckily a mental Mephistophiles can only suggest ideas of what might be, without the power to say they shall be; and the days of "Faust" are gone by.

I wonder, Fred, whether she really is what she seems: whether, if there were the certainty, the absolute certainty of concealment from all the world—whether, like other women, she would——no—no—no, I am afraid that—

——— if only
The midnight moon and silent stars had seen it,
She would not live to be reproached by them:
But dig down deep to find a grave beneath,
And hide her from their beams.

This would be very foolish and very obstinate, supposing it had come to pass; but I am afraid 'tis true; and I have a great deal to do yet. But before I proceed I must tell you of an adventure that I have just met with, which makes more impression on my mind than it deserves; perhaps the greater, from the complete contrast of her who is the heroine of it to her whom I have just quitted.

I told you in a former letter of my having met a drunken woman in the street, who demanded imperiously if my name was not Leslie; of my denying it; of my seeing her again the next day, when the whole circumstance had passed into utter oblivion with her, and when she denied all knowledge of me.

Well, two or three times after this, I met her as I have sometimes walked home from my parties or my club; and whenever she was intoxicated she always addressed me by my name, but when sober, appeared utterly unconscious of knowing me. In short, if she really does know me, her senses seem to move precisely in the inverse ratio to those of other people; for liquor restores her recollection, instead of destroying it. This had excited my curiosity, and I had determined to make La Tour follow her, and discover something of her history the next time that I should encounter her.

To-night my carriage, owing to the immense crowd, was at the top of the Haymarket, and having put Agnes into Trevor's chariot, I was impatient to be alone, to give myself up to all the delicious recollection of an evening spent entirely with her. I determined therefore to walk to my carriage. My whole mind was filled with ideas of the charming Agnes; I lived again over every expression of her lip and eye; I was almost insensible to the surrounding cries of "Coach, your honor," "Light, your honor," and all the horrid noises that invade one's ear on a *sortie* from an English theatre, when I found myself suddenly seized by the arm; a hand was pressed forcibly upon my breast, so as to keep my face just in the light of a gas-lamp, while a voice uttered, or rather hoarsely screamed, "Yes, yes, thou art Leslie! thou *art* LESLIE!" I started from the grasp, as I beheld before me the same woman, in a state of intoxication bordering on madness. Her eye balls glared; her mouth foamed; her matted hair streamed in the winds; a loose red handkerchief attempted in vain to confine the bloated and unnatural protuberances which had once formed a bosom, within their proper boundaries. She was covered *cap-à-pied* with mud, the fruits of sundry rollings in sundry gutters, and as she waved her arms in the air, and then placing one in her side, and again seizing me with the other, stood across my path, you would really have imagined her some demon from the infernal regions. And then her glazed and fixed look; the hoarse guttural sounds that issued from her throat, and which passion and intoxication prevented

her from embodying into words, excepting now and then that they condensed themselves into something like an imprecation, while the breath with which they were uttered came rolling in my face, impregnated with the fumes of gin, and all the "impure spirits of the vasty deep" of her capacious stomach. Really, Fred, it half unmanned me; and then her hellish laugh, when I attempted to shake her off, with the words, "Woman!" she repeated, and then burst into a loud "Ha! ha! ha!" that absolutely drowned the noise of the watchmen's rattles in its loud reverberations. Intemperance had made sad inroads upon her complexion, which, as the strong gas-light fell upon it, I perceived was first flushed and red, turned gradually to a bluish green, such as we have burned salt before our faces. It absolutely startled the watchmen, as they seized her to release the "gentleman," or "gemman," as they called it for shortness (and the shorter perhaps the better,) from her intrusion. La Tour, who had by this time come up to see what detained me, absolutely jumped a yard high, as with a strength almost Herculean she shook the worthy guardians of the night from her; and again screaming the word "woman," I felt her fingers relax in their firm grasp. Her whole form seemed to shrink into weakness; her voice assumed a softness almost feminine, as she exclaimed—"Woman! yes, I *was once* a woman!" A stream of blood gushed from her nose, and she fell flat upon the pavement, striking the head with such violence against the curbstone, that the *lourd* sound (I can't find an English word) still vibrates on my ear. The moment they saw her thus overpowered by her own passions, the valiant keepers of the peace would have laid hold of her by the head and heels, and carried her off to the watch-house, had not my humanity interfered.

Struck by the evident temporary insanity of the poor devil, I threw the watchmen a guinea, and desiring them to be careful of her, I ordered La Tour to accompany them to the watch-house to see that my commands were obeyed, and that she was lodged in safety, at least for the night. As they bore her away she struggled faintly, and my quick ear still caught the name of "Leslie" mixed up with the word "damnation." I say, Fred, that would look ominous did we believe in such a thing, and if this poor devil were a sybil. Well there's my adventure for you:—what think you of it?

Can it be possible that this wretch and Agnes Trevor are of the same sex? Is there not a third species not yet admitted into the distinctions of the historians of human nature?

Some physiologists have imagined a gradation of beings from gods to devils; and if their hypothesis be true, this Slashing Nan, as the guardsman call her, must be about a thousand degrees down the scale towards the latter. And yet, Fred, this wretch had all the attributes of woman. But who in that wild, and bloated, and livid countenance, those pale compressed lips, overflowing with blood and saliva, that dirty matted mane, rather than hair, and those hollow sunken cheeks, covered with a confused mixture of vermilion and perspiration, could recognise a woman's lovely countenance?

——————— that little round,
In which you may observe a world of sweet variety;
For coral lips; for threads of purest gold,
Hair; for delicious choice of flowers cheeks;
Wonder in every portion of that form.

A strange fancy is come over me, and I cannot drive it from my mind. I am imagining Agnes Trevor, the lovely idol of my walking thoughts, the object of my nightly dreams, in whose form nature seems to have been prodigal of beauties, and to have "made her up of every woman's best" reduced to such a wretch as this. It is a strange fancy, is n't it, Fred? and yet my mind is pursuing it with a tenacity which I cannot resist, and which traces the gradual change of every beauty into some loathsome deformity. 'Tis a strange freak of nature, that the extremities of loveliness and loathsomeness should by turns be the attributes of the same forms; and strange, too, that we should sometimes loathe what we have loved; and yet 'tis natural, at least we have found it so, have n't we, Fred?

"Oh, here's La Tour; what the devil ails the fellow? he looks aghast; he is as pale as the pillow-case, and trembles as though he had the tertian ague. Oh, dead—is she? Poor devil!—well—what is that to me?—what's that you say, scoundrel? It can't be—it must be a lie—a damn d lie—

* * * * * * * *

No wonder, Fred, that I stopped writing, and so you'll say when you hear all. Who the deuce do you think this poor creature is, or rather was, for she is now a thing that has been, and is reckoned among the pasts instead of the presents. I don't much like that word *was*, when it is applied to creatures of our own species, and puts us in mind that we too may one day be reckoned among the "has beens." Well, but who do you think she was? from the description I have just given of her you will never guess; so I may as well tell you. Don't start though, a yard from your chair, as I did—but it was poor Fanny Pearson! Yes, the once lovely Fanny Pearson!

Do you remember, Fred, when we first saw her in her father's parsonage in Cornwall, when our confounded chaise was overturned, and my leg nearly broken by the accident? Do you remember how pale she became as the clumsy country Esculapius turned and twisted my ankle about, as though the joint was made of some of the iron out of his native mines? Even now I feel a twinge at the recollection. And at night, do you remember the family circle? the old parson with his full-bottomed wig and placid countenance? his wife, the venerable Lady Bountiful of her husband's parishioners, with her eternal smile and mob-cap, and the thousand and one recipes for a sprained ancle, which the beauty of their only daughter had induced me to magnify into a serious accident, as an excuse for prolonging my stay? and above all, do you remember the then blooming Fanny, with those clustering golden locks that hung over her large blue eyes, while she "plied the busy needle," and listened to the tales of all "the dangers we had passed" in the Peninsula, which, like Othello, we related to their wondering ears.

The whole scene is now before me. I again feel myself snug in the old gentleman's easy-chair, with my foot usurping the empire of his gouty stool, while my eye rested on the clean white window curtains, the cheerful fire, the hissing tea-kettle, and fragrant souchong, handed to me by what I then thought the prettiest little hand in the world; while you played such havoc among that large haycock of toast and butter, which the old lady's hospitality had provided for thy ravenous appetite, for thou always hadst a most unromantic love of eating.

And then the simplicity of the old gentleman; his love for, and his ignorance of politics; his wonder at the difference of Oxford in his time and in ours and then those damnable corkscrew faces of yours, when he proposed to us to join in the family prayer, during which you fell into the soundest nap that ever mortal was blest with; for you are a mere mortal as to sleeping and eating! But above all, Fred, do you remember poor Fanny, with her blooming cheeks, shaking back her clustering locks, and arresting the progress of her needle in the most interesting stitch of the collar which she was working, to listen to your account of my swimming the Douro in the face of the enemy's fire;—we were always each other's trumpeters you know. Then the side-long glance that I caught her casting at me as a large crystal drop of liquid dew forced itself through her long dark lashes, and stole over her soft cheek, while that bosom, so carefully concealed by its snow-white drapery, heaved and fluttered with agitations, till then unknown to her. And can that be the same bosom which I saw a couple of hours since, by the light of the gas-lamp in the Hay-market, bruised and swollen, and exposed to the rude gaze, and still ruder hands of watchmen and street-keepers? To think, Fred, that any thing so lovely should come to this; but 'tis the way of every thing. Cabbages, you know, are now growing in the palaces of the Cæsars; and where Horace lounged and Cicero harangued, the modern Romans now cleanse their heads and kill their pigs:

> To such vile uses must we come at last.
> Imperious Cæsar, dead and turned to clay,
> Might stop a hole to keep the wind away.

All this is melancholy, isn't it, Fred? But what matters it?

> Women to cards may be compared; we play
> A round or two,-when us'd we throw away,
> Take a fresh pack, nor is it worth our grieving,
> Who cuts or shuffles with our dirty leaving.

Then, Fred, do you remember the night she left the parsonage; a cold clear night in September, with a sky studded with stars? Dost remember watching window after window in the humble, though pretty mansion, as they successively darkened, till there was a light only to be seen in one, and that was her's? and dost remember how anxiously we watched the shadow of her figure as she passed between the light and the white dimity curtain, and imagined at every motion her little preparations for flight? I compared it at the time, you know, to the *ombres Chinoises*, with which we used to amuse our sisters during the holydays.

I think I again hear her soft step stealing down the staircase, and again tremble with the fear I felt that she would not come, as I for a moment lost the sound; and which she afterwards told me was occasioned by her sinking on her knees at her father's door, and uttering a prayer that God would bless him! What strange creatures these women are! They pray upon every emergency, whether they are saints or sinner! Then came the trembling drawing back of the bolt; then the cursed creaking of the door, that kept us breathless as the wind before summer storm; and then—she was in my arms—hurried along the little gravel walk, catching with her hand at every tree and flower in our path, and almost clinging to the little wicket entrance, which she was never to pass again. Dost remember, Fred, the autumnal leaves falling upon us as we fled, and the cloud that past over the moon as I lifted her into the chaise, the door of which was held open by that imperturbable La Tour—that fellow has no feeling—and then the river of tears that gushed over my breast, till I was absolutely wet through with grief! Fred, we are sad dogs, and I have been thus particular in my reminiscences by way of penance; the recollection will do us good; and I should have been quite unhappy if I had not given the watchman the guinea to take care of her, and sent Latour to see that it wasn't thrown away.

Poor Fanny! the only thing she wanted to make her perfect, was a little knowledge of the world, and that I gave her. Who would have thought that she would have made such a use of it?

It is really quite lamentable, Fred, to think what rapid and prodigious strides these women make in profligacy, when they are once embarked in its paths. Now you, or I, or any other man, would have been five hundred years in attaining that summit of vice, to which poor Fanny had arrived. Yes, man is a slow animal in these matters; but woman, she is like a letter conveyed by the new process of creating a vacuum, and arrives at her destination at once. We, now, go on gradually. With us

> Ill habits gather by unseen degrees,
> As brooks make rivers—rivers run to seas.

Then women *sometimes* take to drinking; and that helps them on prodigiously. By-the-by, I suppose Milton, in his description of woman's first formation, had an eye to this destructive inclination of the sex, when he made Adam say—

> Who, stooping, opened my left side, and took
> From thence a rib—with CORDIAL SPIRITS warm.

Good night, Fred.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

As to the other persons of our drama, they moved on during this period precisely according to their various characters. Amelia, still as cold and formal, and fashionable as ever, was not aroused out of her usual routine of feeling, or rather want of feeling, by becoming the mother of a beautiful boy.

Her *accouchement* was attended with all the etiquette that the knowledge of Lady Pomeroy could press into her service on the occasion. Dr. Clark, and a nurse who had officiated on such occasions, with two or three countesses and marchionesses, were in attendance in their various capacities; knockers and bells were muffled; the street covered with straw; and every thing conducted perfectly, *en regle.*

Henry Pomeroy was delighted at being a father, and would have spent the whole day in his wife's apartment, and have officiated as principal nurse, had his mother permitted it. He was very anxious that Amelia should perform all the maternal duties herself; and even ventured to suggest that those who consigned such a sweet task to others, were really scarcely more than half the mothers of their own children. All his remonstrances, however, could make no alteration in the determination of Lady Pomeroy that her daughter-in-law should not be made a wet nurse. It was only for vulgar people to follow the course of nature, and spoil their figures; and quite out of the question for people of fashion to do such things. So poor Henry was condemned to see the child of his delighted affection draw its sustenance from a stranger's bosom, and compelled to make love to a buxom nursery maid for the pleasure of nursing his own son.

Amelia was perfectly recovered at the end of a week, but propriety and etiquette required the confinement of a month; and a full month was accordingly permitted to elapse ere the cards of "thanks for obliging inquiries" were issued. The farce of churching was then performed in her own *boudoir;* and Amelia appeared again as blooming as ever, and with as few cares upon her heart and brow as before she had become a mother.

With Lady Pomeroy and Amelia, Trevor's conduct, being fashionable, was passed over as all right; but with his sister, and with Hartley, it was different. They both trembled at the position in which their friend Agnes was placed; they both foresaw the total wreck of her hopes unless Trevor could be brought to his senses; and the one knowing Leslie, and the other suspecting him, both, without communicating with each other, had the same thoughts on the subject, and trembled for the happiness of Agnes though neither of them had a glimpse of suspicion of her honor.

With these feelings the both watched the movements of the Trevors with anxious solicitude, each afraid to disclose their opinions or their fears to any one else. The continuance of the same train of thought at length led to an *éclaircissement* between themselves, and thus the first step to mutual confidence, between Hartley and Lady Emily was taken, through their mutual anxiety for their friend.

All, however, that they could do, was to lament in secret over the conduct of Trevor, and to sympathise with Agnes. Matters continued thus for some time: the alienation ef Trevor and Agnes gradually became greater in reality, though not in appearance. At length Lady Emily ventured to argue with him on the absurdity of his conduct, and to represent its too probable consequences: he always sheltered himself under the example of others, and shook off every remonstrance with the unanswerable argument, that "every body did the same." In his own mind too, though almost without acknowledging it to himself, he had such a thorough dependence upon the affections and principles of his wife, that the "probable consequences" hinted at by his sister were never once thought of with any thing resembling the slightest fear of their occurrence. He therefore pursued his usual course, and spent his whole time in gambling, at his clubs, or in the pursuit of some intrigue, which enabled him to preserve the character of a gay fellow, or which gave him same additional notoriety among that set to which he was proud to belong.

In the mean time Leslie became almost domesticated at Trevor House. He called in the morning immediately after breakfast, rallied Trevor for his perpetual domesticity while he was alone with him in his library, or when in the presence of Agnes, hinted at the happiness he might find at home did he stay there. He was then sure to start some subject, or mention some new attraction, which led Trevor out, and by that means secured himself the company of Mrs. Trevor for the rest of the morning; and all this was so well managed, that Trevor only felt obliged to him for preventing any unpleasant little matrimonial consequences arising from his absence, while Agnes thought she saw a tacict sympathy with her for her husband's neglect.

But Leslie still felt that all these manœuvres were useless; they did not *rapprocher* him to his main object; they seemed to make the way smooth, and yet there was the same insurmountable barrier to be passed over—the conveying a knowledge to her of his passion; nor could all his ingenuity, all his nightly thoughts and daily contrivances, imagine or carve out a method of doing this without creating such an alarm as his "tact" taught him would be fatal to his hopes for ever.

It was in vain that he recurred to all his experience; in vain he plotted and counterplotted; all he could do was to disguise his passion, his intentions, and his wishes, instead of explaining them.

He could mark all his struggling feelings at the evident neglect of her husband; he had read in the glistening eye, the slightly convulsed cheek, the contracted lip, the disappointment of early hope and affectionate anticipation, and he had watched these symptoms till he hoped they had gradually diminished into the indifference with which Trevor's neglect and absence were at present permitted.

CHAPTER XXIX.

LESLIE TO VILLARS.

Why, Villars, do you still pester me with your stories and your fears about the "Lady of the Lake," and her following me through the world? Is not Italy large enough for her to ramble in? Or if she is tired of that, is not the Lago Maggiore deep enough to make her forget me, or any thing else not worth remembering? Has she not wherewithal to indulge the most wayward of her wishes? Has not the letter from Lumley, giving her an account of my decease, satisfied her? Does she not suppose me dead and buried in one of the Ionian islands? and what would she have more? If her love continue so great as you describe it, why let her go and amuse herself by erecting a mausoleum to my memory. I should like to read the epitaph with which she would adorn it.

But you tell me that the old priest from being the humble supplicant—the meek and bare-headed friar—the receiver and distributer of the alms, is become the sturdy threatener—the bold demander of justice—the brave defender and asserter of innocence. The hypocrite! But they are all alike—priests and women—all hypocrisy. This must have been the work of that cursed anonymous scribbler, who did all the mischief. Luckily for us, even he did not know our real names; otherwise, this meddling priest might have given me trouble. You say he doubts my death: I therefore send you out a magazine, in the obituary of which I have inserted the death of an English gentleman, of my assumed name, on his travels, as having occurred in the precise spot where Lumley chose to make me depart this life in such an exemplary and repentant manner.—Weak people often believe that which they see in print, of which they can never be convinced in manuscript, or by mere word of mouth. The devil (the printer's devil, I mean) seems to give it the stamp of truth; and this, I have no doubt, has been the real reason why all the lies of history and tradition have been received as gospel.

Once convinced I am no more, his Christianity will step in to our assistance; his religion will never suffer him to make war with the dead.—He will preach peace and forgiveness, along with the penitence he prescribes to his *protegée*: and we shall jog on, in our old path, without any fear of future molestation. Yet, Fred, keep your eye upon them, I would not have them here for the world. So pray try to blot out such insignificant spots as the British isles from the map of their geographical knowledge. And so much for them.

And now, Fred, to the subject that engrosses my whole soul—that usurps such universal dominion over every sense of which I am possessed, that I cannot call one of them my own. No, they are all—all hers. Nay, she seems, by the influence of the passion she has inspired, to have created new ones. Yes, Fred, I am sure that in the fruition of such a love as mine for Agnes, a thousand new senses must start into existence to allow the full enjoyment of possession. All the feelings inspired by all the other women I have ever known in the world, if they could be congregated and amalgamated into one great passion, could not equal that which is now burning in my heart—yes, burning, Fred—literally, like Polyphemus for Galatea—

> I burn for her with unrelenting fire.

Mine is indeed a giant love; and I wish I had the power to roll down some huge rock upon the head of that Acis of a Trevor when I see him near its object.

If I did not thus suffer my passion to ebullitionize at night in these letters to you, in which the volcano of my heart and mind relieves itself, it would scorch me to a cinder; and the only thing La Tour would have to do at my toilet in the morning, would be to sweep away his master.

All that I have felt before seems only to have been the feeling of a boy. Upon the principle of gymnastics, my heart appears only to have attained strength by exercise, and its foregone experience only serves to make its present faculty of feeling the stronger.

As the Rhone is said to pass through the Lake of Geneva, and to issue out of its clear and crystal waters without leaving a trace of its own darker hue; so hither has passion after passion rolled through this heart of mine, and left it untouched by their fires. But this, Fred, this passion—this madness—this—call it what you please—for love is too cold a word, that occupies me now—is not, I fear, to be quenched, even by possession. Possession! my thoughts must not wander that way; and yet this dolt of a husband, this miserable, this insensible tool and fool, who prefers a gaming-table and the rattle of dice to the society and conversation of such a woman; and who deserts that bed, which her beauty so bravely becomes as it lies pillowed to receive him, for the purchased caresses of a foreign paramour; does everything in his power to throw her into my arms; and my web is silently, and I trust surely, weaving around him. Yes, he will be in my toils; and she must—she shall follow. Yes, Fred, *shall*; and when I say *shall* and *will*, I mean *volition*, and not the mere future tense; and you know I have never said it in vain.

Yet how or in what way to accomplish this will, I can see no present means; though this plotting head of mine absolutely aches with the schemes that it daily, nightly, and hourly suggests, with this sole object in view. The treadmill itself does not revolve more times in the course of the four-and-twenty hours than this brain of mine in the consideration of the various projects and plans which present themselves.—The ruin of her husband does not afford means quick enough for my impatience. The dice are not *always* against him; and thus it is a longer operation than I had calculated upon, and in the mean time my passion is preying upon my very soul—is wearing me out inch by inch; and it becomes a matter of absolute justice to myself to succeed. Self-preservation, everybody says, is the first law of nature; and nobody can blame me for acting upon that which

actuates everybody. Yes, the possession of Agnes Trevor is absolutely necessary to my existence; and it would indeed be a kind of moral suicide, not to attempt everything to compass my ends: and suicide, you know, is the worst of crimes; isn't it, Fred?"

You say, give her up; come to Italy, and lose all recollection of such a coy beauty, in the arms of the many willing ones who will welcome me there. Fred, I cannot do it. Nor could the possession of all the women in Italy, provided you could ensure me such wholesale merchandise, quench the *soif de jouissance* which she has inspired. Yet what to do, I know not. To gain her by consent seems to be a work of ages. She will never yield till her gray hairs have rendered *her* unlovely, and my own have made *me* impotent—neither of them desirable circumstances, under any event; for I have known two elderly people, whose passions are dead, to compare former feelings over conversational souchong and regret that they did not understand each other when their passions were alive, and when the understanding would not have been entirely useless. Think of this Fred, and let us save ourselves and others from this useless repentance.

But am I to be foiled?—foiled by a girl? I, who have triumphed over twenty—I believe I may add ten to the number, but I have not my common place book by me, and I don't like to commit myself; yet one cannot call that conquest either, where willingness met us in the middle of the way, and save us the trouble of going over the other half. To conquer such a woman as this, is indeed conquest—at least it shall be. But how to make it so, that is the question; whether gentleness will win her to my purpose, or whether Tarquin like, I shall make her mine by force; and win her will and heart afterwards, eh, Fred? shall her attendant

——————Some morning early
Find the bed unhearsed of her mistress?

What say you to this? Shall I venture? What though I failed, and died in the attempt, I should be found like the miser in the ruins of Herculaneum, scorched to death with my treasure in my hand. Yet no, I would not owe her to force; that is, provided I can win her otherwise; I must have her mind—her heart—her will—her *soul*. But you say, that with a woman so constituted, forbidden joys would produce agony instead of delight; that the anxiety, the guilt, the terror, would turn pleasure into pain. Fred, you don't know human nature so well as old Ovid, that venerable patriarch of love's literature, who, speaking of what are called guilty joys, says,

The guilt which makes them anxious makes them GREAT.

And is not this true? and have not we found it so?—to be sure we have; and shall again, I trust.

* * * * * * * *

To resume; I had scarcely written the above when in came Trevor, on his way from his club. I don't know how it is, but my heart always rises, and a kind of something like suffocation oppresses me at the sight of him; and yet, poor devil, he helps me as much as he can. But what do you think he came for?—why, to tell me they were making arrangements for passing the summer at Trevor Hall, and that I was included in the party proposed to be invited. What think you of that, Fred? To be domesticated in the same house with her; to sleep under the same roof with her to have her constantly before my eyes; the companion of my walks and rides; her conversation in the morning, her harp in the evening; and then the opportunities that must occur, and if they don't occur naturally, that I shall make. By heavens, this will seal our fate,—this will make her mine. Well, to use Bonaparte's favorite phrase, "Que les destins s'accomplissent!"

Thanks to Trevor and his hospitality! I shall certainly accept his invitation—would n't you Fred?

Besides, La Tour—that subtle devil, has made himself so completely the master of the *femme-de-chambre's* heart; and, if appearances are not deceitful, of her person too, (La Tour is a sad dog among the women, and I must correct him,) that she will do any thing for me. Oh these women! —"of every ten that are made, the devils mar five;"—and who knows Fred—in the same house, with the maid in one's favor,—who knows what may happen? or rather, what may not happen? Dressing-rooms have closets: bed rooms back stair cases. Mem.—to make myself perfectly acquainted with the whole topography of the house—from the attic to the basement—from the housemaid's room to the *dormitorio* of the lovely mistress. I have known a great deal done and a great deal escaped by a thorough knowledge of the *ways* of a large house—have not you, Fred!

Lady Flora Freeling, the young wife of the old financier, is to be of the party; she is Trevor's passion for the moment, and I have little doubt her consenting to be one of us is his principal reason for the arrangement. Luckily, too, the Argus-eyed friend of Agnes, Lady Emily Trevor, is obliged to attend her Lady mother into Yorkshire, where of course she will be followed by her substantial shadow, my cousin Hartley; so that I anticipate a clear field. We are to start in three days; my next letter, therefore, Fred, will, for the first time, be dated under the same roof with *her*—mind, whenever you find a feminine pronoun without any antecedent, that you always translate it—Agnes! I don't know whether there is any grammatical rule for this in Lindley Murray—but never mind.

Now is it not odd, Fred, that Trevor should prefer such a woman as Lady Flora, whom both you and I know very well, and never quarrelled in our opinion about her, to such a woman as I describe his wife to be? Can there be any truth in the idea that mariage really diminishes one's feelings, and lessens that beauty in a wife in the eyes of her husband, which he admired in her when he considered her only as a mistress, because she is a wife? Good night, Fred.

London was now beginning to thin; parliament had been prorogued; the closed window-shutters of different houses were beginning to proclaim the absence of their tenants; and Agnes longed to escape from the dissipation and oppressive heat of

London, once more to breathe the free, clear, and open air of the country.

As the thought of Trevor Hall came upon her mind, a gentle sigh escaped her; but she had long long since descarded the idea that the country was to recall those scenes which rendered the first months of her marriage so happy. She had long since ceased to hope it; and, almost unconsciously to herself, had unfortunately ceased to wish it. This latter feeling had created some little surprise in her own mind; but it was very easily attributable to the conduct of Trevor, and to the total difference of his character from any thing she had ever anticipated.

A party was soon made up among the few people who remained in town; and others agreed to come at stated periods during their stay at the hall. Lady Flora, Leslie, and D'Oyley, were among those proposed by Trevor, and assented to by Agnes, who felt great pleasure in Leslie's being included in her husband's invitation, as his apparent friendship, as well as his talents had made him to her a very desirable addition to her party.

The arrangements were therefore soon made; the London establishment was put upon board wages; the imperials were crammed; the carriages filled; and away flew the Trevor family and their party, to carry London into the country.

Leslie, to the great joy of Flounce, and to the pretended delight of La Tour, followed a few days after, and arrived just as the family were comfortably established at that place, in which alone Agnes had ever tasted the delights of married happiness.

CHAPTER XXX.

It was in the country that Leslie was destined to feel the full force of that attraction which was becoming his destiny. In the midst of London dissipation, Agnes had never appeared half so charming, half so fascinating as now, that, untrammeled by the fetters of fashionable society, she gave way to her natural disposition. Welcomed and beloved by her tenantry, she seemed the guardian angel, the tutelar genius of the neighborhood, and devoted her mornings to inquire into and remedy the evils which had arisen from their long absence.

The large party at Trevor Hall being literally, either purposely on the part of Trevor, or accidentally on the part of Agnes, so selected, that they were divided into pairs, and Trevor devoting himself almost exclusively to Lady Flora Freeling, Agnes was left during the mornings almost entirely to Leslie.

He rode with her—he walked with her—he encountered her in her morning visits of charity, apparently engaged in the same object. He met her in her evening stroll on the terrace, from which it was one of her great delights to watch the sun sink into the distant bosom of the Atlantic; and he hung enchanted over her at the harp, descanting with enthusiasm on the sweet sounds that seemed to engross his whole soul.

Admiring the same beauties, engaged in the same pursuits, no wonder that ideas of the congeniality of their minds and dispositions sprang up in the breast of Agnes; and with it came also a feeling of regret, of almost sympathy, that one who seemed so every way capable of bestowing happiness, should not have met with some woman whose heart and mind might have corresponded with the warm and enthusiastic feelings by which his own appeared to be directed. Then her thoughts would glance for a moment at Trevor—would draw an involuntary comparison, and an involuntary sigh would escape her. But thoughts like these she felt to be dangerous, and with a strong resolution she threw them from her.

Sometimes, as they rode or walked together, engaged either in conversation or charitable pursuits, she would wonder at the early impressions she should have imbibed of this man, and could scarcely believe that the Leslie she now saw, and he whom she recollected to have heard and judged of through the medium of the paragraphs which recorded his crime, was the same person.

Leslie exerted all his powers of conversation to render their *tête-à-têtes* as long and as delightful as possible: with his observations on the scenery and circumstances around him, he would mingle tales of romantic adventure—anecdotes of daring gallantry—and sometimes venture upon a story of enthusiastic passion, that would call the color into the cheek of Agnes, and dim her eye with the tear of sympathy and admiration. To lead her thoughts to himself, he would then become apparently abstracted; a sigh would escape from his bosom, a cloud come over his brow; recollections and regrets would appear to oppress him almost to agony; the moment that he perceived this change had fixed her attention, he would strike the rowels into the side of his horse, and starting from her side in a furious gallop, appeared determined to outride recollection and regret, and then return to her in a few minutes with a forced gayety that only added strength to the impression made by his previous apparently deep feeling.

He knew that in such a heart as that of Agnes all this must in time make its way. He felt her increasing interest in his fate; and with that tact which is never deceived, where it exists, he fully understood that these interviews, so delightful to him from one cause, and yet so tantalizing from another, were any thing but uninteresting to her, and he blessed the happy constitution of the party at Trevor House for leaving her so much to himself.

Patient as he had compelled himself to be, he began to tire of the passive part he was compelled to play—a part so unlike that dictated by his hitherto enterprising disposition; yet for the life of him he dared not proceed. The fact was, in no other instance had his heart been engaged in the pursuit; in no other woman had he found such admirable qualities so blended, that while one excited his passion to the utmost, another kept him within the bounds of respect. Yet, could he have been sure, or could he even have hoped that he had excited one incipient reciprocal feeling to plead for

him in her breast, he had long ere this have ventured all, and have declared himself.

But of this there was no appearance; warm, as were her feelings, glowing with all the animation of youth, and disappointed as they had been, where they ought to have been gratified, they exercised themselves in charity and not love. Yet her heart was such, that he was convinced it was not framed to remain insensible; he felt certain that the indifference to which Trevor's conduct had reduced her, must, at some period or other, be succeeded by another passion; he could not believe that such a heart could remain long unoccupied. In the meantime, he was certainly more in the thoughts of Agnes than he supposed, though without exciting one of the feelings that he wished.

She was, as he had calculated, grateful for his conduct with regard to Trevor, and she felt a pleasure in the sympathy which she had excited in a mind evidently so superior to the generality of those by whom she was surrounded. She saw, too, that this man loved, and she believed him to be unhappy; and her curiosity being excited as to the object of his attachment, together with the evident anxiety of his mind, kept him almost a perpetual inmate of her thoughts.

As she became the more perplexed, the more restless became her curiosity to discover his secret, and during the execution of that part of his scheme by which he expected to rouse some feeling of jealousy, she had fixed upon two or three who seemed to be the likely fair ones; but still she could not decide.

These thoughts had intruded themselves with more force than usual one morning during a ride in which she had been accompanied by some of her party without Leslie, to pay visits at a distance, and she was still canvassing his conduct with regard to various females with whom she had formerly seen him, when her carriage arrived at her own door. On alighting, instead of going to the drawing room, she passed into the library, but stopped suddenly as she observed Sir Robert Leslie absorbed in the contemplation of a miniature which lay before him on the table. His head rested on his hands; his eye seemed fixed intently on the object before him; and so intently did he appear to be occupied by his contemplation of the portrait, that her entrance had not disturbed him.

Her first motion was to withdraw; but her curiosity, and the secret hope at length of its being gratified, detained her. A deep sigh escaped from Leslie. Emotions which he appeared struggling to repress seemed to overpower him. He started, and wiped the portrait with his handkerchief as though a tear had dropped upon it. He pressed it to his lips and heart; then gazed upon it again and again; and laying it on the table, concealed his face with his hands, and resting his forehead upon the miniature, sobbed almost convulsively.

Agnes watched him in breathless silence; she felt unable either to retreat or to advance; the contemplation of so much feeling where she had been so often led to suppose there was none; the sighs which now rapidly succeeded each other as he gave way to the sensations which seemed to be overpowering him; altogether created in her own bosom an emotion which kept her silent and impeded her utterance. Her heart beat quickly: a tear of sympathy for sufferings, which she attributed to unrequited love, sufferings, the acuteness of which her own recollection taught her, and which none can feel like woman, trembled in her eye. Yet, sensible of the impropriety of intruding thus upon his secret sorrows, she wished to gain the door unobserved, and to leave him ignorant that there had been any witness to such unequivocal demonstrations of an unhappy attachment.

But she was too late; her first movement struck upon the ear of Leslie; he started, gazed for an instant wildly upon Agnes, then seizing the miniature, closed it hastily, and grasped it with an energy which seemed to say, "None shall take my only treasure from me," held it against his breast. Neither of them could speak for a moment. He gazed at her with an intensely inquiring eye, as though he would ascertain if she had penetrated his secret; and she was too confused by the nature of the scene she had contemplated, and the suddenness of the discovery, to utter a syllable.

At length recovering herself, she repressed the expression of sympathy which was her first impulse; she attempted to address him with an air of badinage, and approaching him—"So, so, Sir Robert Leslie, I find the world does indeed belie your heart when it has designated it as insensible."

"Mrs. Trevor—madam—I beseech," stammered out Leslie.

"Nay, nay, Sir Robert; but may I not know—may not the friendship which exists between us—I mean between you and Mr. Trevor, give me a privilege, where I perceive your are far from happy?"

"O! no, no, no!" exclaimed Leslie, energetically.

"May I not ask? Pernaps I might be of service—"

"Of service!—you! you!—oh, no, no, no!" and a sigh burst from his bosom, so deep, that Agnes almost imagined that his heart would have broken with its utterance. She was affected, deeply affected; her words no longer flowed freely—they faltered on her lips—she became silent and confused—he gazed at her for a moment—clasped his hands wildly together—appeared on the point of speaking, and rushed precipitately out of the library, leaving Agnes astonished at the extent of his agitation and alarmed at her own emotions.

For a moment after his departure she remained silent. How wrongly has this man, thought she, been estimated by that world which has pronounced him as unfeeling? How wrong to imagine him cold-hearted! Where there is so much genuine feeling united with so much talent, there must be virtue. Such were the reflections which passed through her mind when Flounce came running into the library, and exclaimed, "Bless me, ma'am, what can be the matter with Sir Robert Leslie?"

So simple a question, but so accordant with her present thought, startled Agnes.

"The matter with Sir Robert Leslie, girl? why, what should be the matter?"

"Oh, nothing, ma'am, only he nearly ran over me just now in the great avenue," said Flounce;

"and in his haste and confusion, for he was confused, I assure you, ma'am, he dropped this." And Agnes again started, and felt the color come in double tides to her cheeks as she saw the identical red morocco case in which she had so recently seen Leslie shut up the miniature he had been contemplating.

"And why did you not return it?"

"I called after him, ma'am; but he was out of sight in an instant: and I thought the best thing I could do, ma'am, was to bring it to you," said Flounce.

"I hope you havn't had the imprudence to open it?" said her lady; "it would have been very wrong if you had."

"Oh dear no, ma'am—not for the world—I would not do such a thing for the world. It shuts with a spring, I think, for I could not find out the way—I mean—that is—," and Flounce stammered—with a kind of half confession of an unsuccessful attempt.

"Go, give it to Sir Robert's servant."

"To Monsieur La Tour, ma'am?"

"Yes—yet stay"—then in a low voice—"he may not like to trust it to his care. I had better take it myself and deliver it, with the assurance that it has been unopened. Give it to me, and you need mention nothing to his servant of the circumstance."

"Oh, certainly not, ma'am—you may depend upon me, ma'am. Shall I lay out your last blonde dress for dinner to-day, ma'am, or will you have the silver tissue?"

"Any thing you please," said Agnes, as her eyes were fixed intently on the miniature case, and away tripped the *femme-de-chambre* to her avocations of the toilet.

Agnes contemplated the picture case for some minutes in silence; she turned it round in her hand, and looked at both sides of it as though she expected to discover whose resemblance it containned from the outside.

The temptation to open it came strong upon her. Curiosity, our great mother's vice, became absolutely intense; yet still she resisted the inclination, though her eyes were riveted to the case. Argument after argument entered into her mind as an excuse for the gratification of her desire to see the miniature; but the innate delicacy of her mind prevailed over her curiosity; and she was about placing it in some secure drawer until she saw Leslie to return it to him, when, at an accidental pressure upon the spring, the cover flew open, and the portrait was displayed to her astonished and almost unbelieving sight. She started—the blood rushed to her face, and then back again to her heart; she breathed almost convulsively, as she exclaimed, "Good God! what do I see? Can I believe my eyes? my own portrait!!!"

A sickness came over her heart; a dizziness spread itself over her sight; she sunk almost fainting into her chair, and her hand with the picture fell listlessly by her side. Still she did not let it drop.

A few seconds recovered her, and she again looked upon the portrait. It was indeed a striking resemblance, and must have been painted by one who had studied her features well. As she knew Leslie painted, and could not imagine that he would venture to employ any artist in such a task, she attributed the portrait to his own hands; and a feeling of tenderness, accompanied by a sentiment of gratitude, not unmixed with pleasure, stole over her as she mentally confessed that his memory in absence must have been very faithful to have produced so striking a likeness. She resisted this feeling with all the remaining strength of her mind; for the sudden surprise had completely unnerved her. A thousand recollections now crowded upon her to convince her of what the portrait and his recent agitation too plainly told; a thousand circumstances were now accounted for which had hitherto appeared mysterious. Her mind became confused; tears started in her eyes; but seemed immediately scorched up by the intensity of her feelings. A dangerous contrast between such a proof of attachment and the neglect of Trevor occurred to her imagination, and it was in vain that she strove to banish the unwelcome comparison. The exclamation of "Oh! Trevor, why hast thou not loved like this?" burst from her lips; and she continued absorbed in the contemplation of the portrait, recalling the dangerous recollections of the sighs and tears that Leslie had breathed and shed over it—of the agitation he betrayed at her entrance—and the feeling amounting almost to agony that he seemed to endure when, with a convulsive effort, he repressed the utterance of his secret, which she now plainly felt he had almost, and feared that he had quite betrayed.

As these thoughts and these recollections came over her, and convinced her of the necessity of resisting them, she also began to think how she should conduct herself with regard to the picture; to return it herself was impossible; to permit her maid to do it, was not only to run the risk of her discovering whose portrait it was, but it was tacitly permitting him to retain a resemblance of her, which decidedly ought not to be the case. To destroy it occurred to her mind; but then her maid might tell La Tour, and La Tour would undoubtedly tell his master of her having found it, and of the manner in which she disposed of it.

To prevent the restoration of the portrait to the hands of Leslie, and to keep him in ignorance of her knowledge of it, was the desideratum to be arrived at; but no scheme that she could contrive was likely to accomplish this.

Poor Agnes was utterly unused to plotting; her mind and disposition, as open as the day, never yet had had occasion for a subterfuge of any sort or kind. Yet here she felt the necessity for concealment; felt it for her own sake, and felt it for Leslie's; since it was from no fault, no presumption of his, but from mere unavoidable accident, that she had obtained a knowledge of his secret, and our first parents scarcely repented more of the acquisition of their knowledge through disobedience, than she did of that which she had obtained within the last quarter of an hour by the accidental gratification of her curiosity.

Her situation seemed surrounded with difficulties, and she was still contemplating the portrait, and still pondering on the best method of extricating herself from them, without either betraying Leslie or compromising herself, when she started horror-struck from the *fauteuil* on which she was sitting, on hearing the exclamation of—

"What a striking likeness! never saw such a resemblance in my life; a Chalons in point of style; a Stump in point of coloring; a Drummond in point of expression. Pray, Mrs. Trevor, let me examine it more closely; for if there is any thing I do understand, it is painting." And before Mrs. Trevor could prevent him, D'Oyley had possessed himself of the miniature, and was criticising its merits through his glass.

"Quite a Lawrence in miniature, I declare—as perfect an ivory as I ever beheld; the mind glowing in the features. You must know, ma'am, expression in portrait-painting is everything; as I said to Jackson the other day, when he was just touching up Lady Sarah's chin, attend to the expression; for there is more mind in Lady Sarah's chin, than in the eyes, nose, and mouth of many other people: you know Lady Sarah's whole character lies in her chin; and if there is any thing I understand, it is expression."

Mr. D'Oyley—Mr. D'Oyley!" exclaimed Agnes; and she spoke in a tone which electrified the poor busy creature.

"Ma—a—a—m——?"

But she immediately felt the imprudence of giving way to her anger; and therefore forcing a smile, she modulated her voice to a softer tone, and said—"Mr. D'Oyley, you frightened—I mean, surprised me."

"Really—did I—well really now. I am positively sorry, and positively beg pardon; but the fact was, wanting to see Trevor to say many happy returns of to-day—his birth-day—I thought he was in the library, and I came in unannounced. I always think an unexpected congratulation gives the most pleasure; and if there is anything I do understand, it is giving pleasure."

How severely Agnes felt the contrary, it is needless to observe: she held her hand out for the portrait; but D'Oyley still retained it.

"It is excellent, really excellent; but it wants a touch here—one touch; and the drapery, a little stiff; this sleeve should have been a *gigot*, and this kerchief *couleur cerulean*. It would have assorted better with the character of the picture; and if there is anything I do understand, it is character."

"Sir—sir—pray—pray—the portrait—somebody—" and she was going with her usual openness to betray her fears, when D'Oyley, returning the miniature, interrupted her.

"Ha! I see how it is—see it all in a moment—Trevor's birth-day. The portrait a present—a pleasing surprise! Well, if there is any thing I do understand, it is guessing. Happy Trevor! to have a wife who—" At this moment Trevor entered the library—she had still the portrait in her hand. "Ha, Trevor," continued the pertinacious D'Oyley, "you are arrived just in time—just in time to be the happiest fellow on earth; such a likeness was never seen! Her very self—nay, madam, for once let a poor forlorn bachelor witness the pleasures of connubial attention, if he cannot enjoy them. Nay—nay—I must tell him." Agnes had no power to interrupt him: her tongue seemed to cling to the roof of her mouth. "I can't contain it—Trevor! Mrs. Trevor has the best likeness of herself—the most delightful miniature—as a present for you. Now—pray, madam give it him. There—there it is; and now, I take my leave; for if there is anything I do understand, it is the proper time for every thing."

"A miniature!—a present for me?" said Trevor, as he took the portrait from her resistless and trembling hand. "A striking resemblance indeed, and I am grateful for it. But why—why this agitation?—why do you tremble? Ah! I know, Agnes, that you think, perhaps, that my late conduct has not deserved such attention. But, believe me, my inattention is only apparent: the calls on my time—our station in society—the necessity for doing as other people do."

"Oh, Trevor!" exclaimed Agnes, with a faltering voice; and this little apologetic appeal was softening her heart towards him; and she was going to disclaim the picture, the present, and the reproach, when the difficulty of the explanation struck her again speechless. She saw no way of making it with honor to herself, or safety to others, for to such a mind as that of Agnes, to have inspired an illicit love, even involuntarily, appeared a degradation, if not a crime. The recollection of what she imagined had been Leslie's long series of sufferings—the suddenness of the discovery—the circumstances attending it—had, in the first moment of surprise, seduced her heart to take a more lenient view of the event, than even the very short time which had elapsed would permit her to retain; and the sight of her husband—a word or two of returning tenderness, recalled to her all the criminality of the passion she had pitied; and her attempt at explanation, proved to her the predicament in which she was placed.

Trevor still attributed her agitation to the first cause to which he had ascribed it; and still attempted to soothe it by a continuance of the same defence with which he had commenced, when he was interrupted by the sudden entrance of Leslie; who, with a perturbed step and anxious countenance, almost rushed into the apartment.

Thunderstruck at the sight of Trevor with his arm round Agnes, who seemed ready to sink with agitation, and at seeing the portait in his hand, his first thoughts were, that a fit of indignation had induced her to give it to her husband, and explain to whom it belonged, and how it had come into her possession. He cursed in his heart the folly and caprice of women; and was bitterly repenting his experiment, when he was relieved by Trevor's presenting him the portrait, and demanding his opinion of its resemblance.

Astonished, and, with all his *sang-froid*, uncertain how to act, and whether Trevor spoke satirically, and with a full knowledge of the circumstances, he cast a rapid glance at Agnes. Her face was, however, hid upon her husband's shoulder. He could catch no instructions—no hint—for his reply; and he again inwardly and bitterly cursed the sex and its caprices.

Trevor, however relieved him by asking—"Is it not an excellent likeness? You must not laugh at my little old-fashioned wife, Leslie. But this is my birth-day; and it being only the second since our marriage, she has planned this little surprise for me. Is it not her very self?"

"It is indeed, a most excellent likeness;" and again he cast his eyes towards Agnes. Trevor had now changed his position, and by approach

ing, had placed himself between Leslie and his wife.

Agnes' eyes were not this time turned from him. They followed her clasped hands, which were raised silently to heaven, as though attesting her innocence; while an almost impatient motion of her head negatived the idea that she had been at all accessory to the deceit.

"The artist has certainly done his best, and succeeded admirably," pursued Trevor. "Did you ever see a greater effect produced by any artist in the world?"

"Oh! an immense effect, certainly," rejoined Leslie, with another glance at Agnes, which was this time returned with indignation.

"Really, my love," continued Trevor, "you must patronise the fellow, he must be a genius; and then, he has kept your secret so well; who is he?—who is he, Agnes?"

"It is necessary, Trevor, that—that I should explain:" she hesitated. "Sir Robert Leslie can inform you best." Her courage rose with the determination to act rightly; and the whole history of the portrait was evidently coming, when Leslie interrupted her with—"Yes, yes, Trevor; it is an artist of my recommendation; one under my patronage; and I recommended him to Mrs. Trevor's attention, as one who would exert himself to the utmost to deserve her future favors."

An appealing look to Agnes, and her own fears of the too probable consequences of an *eclaircissement*, rendered her again silent; and made her, for the first time in her life, the tacit partner in a falsehood.

Leslie saw that he was safe; and feeling that his continued security depended upon the present absence of Trevor, he reminded him of some mutual engagements for the morning, and hurried him away; leaving Agnes a prey to the most mortifying reflections, and under the painful conviction that if she had not herself acted with duplicity, she had aided the deceit of another by a silence which her conscience condemned as criminal.

CHAPTER XXXI.

LESLIE TO VILLARS.

'Tis done, Fred, 'tis done—she knows that I love her, and has nothing to blame but her own curiosity; that is certainly a prevalent vice with the sex. It drove Eve out of Paradise, and Fatima into the Blue Chamber.

It was nothing but curiosity now that gave Agnes the knowledge of my passion. I had instilled into her head that I loved somebody, and she could never be easy till she knew who it was—never once guessing it was herself: who could it be, while she was in the world, and near me? But how did you do it? How did it come about? methinks I hear you ask. Why, then, Fred, to tell you the honest truth, I put my scheme of the portrait into execution—contrived to be discovered weeping and sighing over it—you know I can weep and sigh upon occasions—refused to tell whose resemblance it was—managed to drop it, and through the medium of Mrs. Flounce to place it in the hands of Agnes. Her curiosity did the rest, and discovered her own miniature, wet with my tears. Oh, Fred! I would have given worlds to have witnessed the first effect of the discovery—to have seen the color that mantled her cheek as she perused the lineaments of her own sweet face: then the succeeding paleness at the idea of being loved—as she knows and feels that I can love; for I have contrived to instil that idea into her mind. Perhaps, too, a starting tear—a fluttering about the heart—a slight sensation of suffocation, and a half-suppressed sigh, might have accompanied the *unexpected* discovery. Do you think she did sigh, Fred? Unexpected! and was it unexpected? Oh, yes! she is above all artifice; and therefore you will say, much more likely to be its victim. Do you really think so?—what a pity!

Well, Fred, the comedy was played to the life: I acted the passionate and despairing lover, and Flounce the chambermaid to a miracle. But there was one actor in the scene who certainly was never included in the *dramatis personæ* of my piece—and this was Trevor himself. How the devil he came there, I am even now at a loss to determine: but imagine, Fred, on my return, intending to act the anxious loser of my only treasure, and to perceive and make use of the effect of the discovery which had taken place; for I was not summoned by Flounce till she had ascertained that her mistress had actually opened the miniature: imagine, I say, my finding the portrait in the hands of Trevor himself, looking much more conjugal (curse the fellow!) than I have seen him look these last six months. At first, I imagined, like Lady Teazle, she had told the truth; and that, like poor Joseph Surface, I should be bowed out for my morality, and cut off from my hopes for ever. But, no! she was too sensible a woman to make mischief; or, perhaps, too much afraid of the consequences of an *exposé*. Trevor's manner soon convinced me that all was safe. He thanked her for the portrait, as though it had been a present from her to him; thanked her in a voice of so much more tenderness than usual, that I could have cursed him. I believe I did indulge in a little mental imprecation. Could she have wilfully deceived him? I can scarcely think it. Her face was alternately pale and red—the heaving of her bosom displayed the agitation of her mind—her eye, half filled with tears, fell beneath my inquisitive glance. Trevor inquired who was the artist that had painted the picture. I suppose he wants a portrait of Lady Flora! Still she was silent—for how should she know, poor soul! and I suppose no miniature-painter presented his card to her remembrance at that moment; so to relieve her from the dilemma, I answered that it was a young artist whom I had recommended to the patronage of Mrs. Trevor, whose favors he was most anxious to receive and deserve. That was well thrown in, Fred, wasn't it? considering that she no doubt thinks me the painter. Had you seen her look—her full eyes first fell on me with a glance of indignation—very ungrateful, considering the lie was

intended for her benefit—they were then cast up to heaven, or rather to the ceiling; and her hands seemed to move involuntarily, in some silent appeal. I saw the truth was trembling on her lips, and ready to embody itself into utterance. It was then my turn to make a silent appeal to *my* heaven; which I did by looking at her unperceived by Trevor, who was still contemplating the portrait, and who helped me at this moment by exclaiming that he had "never known an artist produce more effect." I thougnt so too; for the effect was "prodigious," as the Dominie would say; and before Agnes could recover herself, I hurried him out of the room, half ashamed, as he was becoming, of the neglect with which he had treated a woman who had still so much tenderness for him, as to make her show him such an attention as this present of her portrait. Credulity certainly accompanies matrimony; and this is undoubtedly one of the wise laws of the creation for keeping the peace.

Thus, Fred, you see how we stand. Agnes knows my love; and what is better, has given at least a tacit assent to what she knew to be a falsehood; and, better than all, that falsehood was to deceive her husband. I have lost my portrait, it is true; but I have made one step towards gaining the original.

And now, I dare say, considering the vehemence of my last letter, that you are astonished at my coolness, after all these surprising circumstances. But the fact is, that my impatience was increased to such fever velocity, merely for the bare want of letting Agnes know of my love. It was insupportable to live with her, to converse with her, and yet find no opportunity of disclosing my passion. But that once done, my heart is relieved—it has leisure to repose itself. I begin to see my way; I feel like the general, who, all enthusiasm before action, becomes cool and calculating the moment the first shell is thrown, or the first shot fired; or, like the inventor of the water rocket, my catamaran being launched, I shall lay upon my oars, and wait for the explosion; for I am much mistaken in my calculations, if the knowledge of my passion does not fire a train of ideas and feelings in the heart of Agnes, of the existence of which she had no conception, till this discovery acted like the match to enlighten her on the subject.

Besides, to tell you a truth, Fred, but this, you know, is entirely *entre nous*, there is among the little protegees of Mrs. Trevor's charity in the neighborhood, one object deserving of a better fate, and of something warmer than charity; she lives in a cottage covered with woodbines, and ministers to the wants of an aged parent; but with all her care, she will soon see that a few guineas will administer much more solid comforts than mere filial attention; and she is fast coming to this same conclusion, or I am much mistaken. You know, Fred, talents such as mine ought not to lie idle; and I cannot suffer my *grande passion* to scorch me quite to a cinder. But to return to the effect of this discovery upon the unsuspecting heart of Agnes.

Ha! La Tour, and with a portentous countenance! "Une lettre timbrée de Florence!" "From Villars, I suppose?" "Non, monsieur." "For me?" "Non, monsieur; poor madame." "Then why bring it here? Oh, well, I see—you thought it might perhaps relate to me, and therefore have abstracted it from Mrs. Trevor's packet, and brought it for my perusal, lest it should betray—humph. La Tour, you have been guilty of a vile breach of trust, I believe of felony; what do you think will become of you for this? No, no; you need not take it away. The mischief's done; so put it down; but mind in future,—in future La Tour—should you ever perceive a letter from Italy again—from Italy mind—you understand me?" "Oui, monsieur." "Then take that purse, and divide its contents between yourself and Mrs. Flounce. Ah, La Tour, I am afraid of your morals, I must put that girl on her guard;" and away he goes, with a grin from ear to ear, and with his shoulders half a yard higher than nature intended them. That fellow has no conscience, Fred; yet in his master's service he is certainly a most remarkably acute, sensible d——d scoundrel.

Now for the letter, upon which I have not yet cast my eyes, for I never suffer La Tour to interrupt my writing: zounds! would you believe it? the cramp hand, the very same handwriting of the cursed intruder in my affairs at the Lago Maggiore;—what can there be in common between him and Agnes?

I have read the cursed scrawal: it is in the same hand, and by the same author as that which caused all the mischief with the lady of the lake: but I will copy it, that is, if my indignation does not induce me to tear it to atoms before I can complete it. So read.

"Although my former warning was disregarded, once more do I address you, once more do I venture to the brink of the precipice upon which you stand, to save you. (You see, Fred, they are old correspondents.) You are receiving a profligate to your friendship; fostering a serpent in your bosom, and bestowing your confidence on one whose only triumph and pleasure is in the destruction and dishonor of your sex. God forbid that even a supposition contrary to your honor should enter my imagination; (complimentary, Fred;) but she that confides in her own strength, and not on that rock of ages which religion has built up for the protection of virtue and of principle, (rather methodistical,) is never safe from the artifice of the tempter—from the wily deceits of the licentious. Beware of Leslie! (You see he knows my name, and that I am the profligate received to her friendship, the serpent fostered in her bosom—not yet, Fred,) He is an unprincipled scoundrel, (hard words, Fred,) whom neither the laws of God nor man control; who sacrifices to his own selfishness and sensuality the virtue, the peace, the happiness, and life of his victims. I am now in search of one betrayed by his arts, and deserted by his villany. Were it not for this and for my determination to do justice to injured innocence, I would be even now at your side, to expose to yourself and to the world the arts and the true character of this deceiver. Believe not in the speciousness of the exterior; remember the serpent's sting is not the less venomous from the variegated colors of his skin. (Quite metaphorical, Fred.) Remember, too, and bitterly do I regret it, that had my warning with regard to your husband met with attention, you would not now have been a neglected wife. (I owe him a

good turn for reminding her of that, however, Fred, and I'll pay him ALL I owe him one day or other.) Neglect not my advice a second time; discard this man from your society; contamination is in his touch; but justice is at hand."

There, Fred, there is this precious letter, which I think quite as well in my hands as in those of Agnes, and therefore, upon second thoughts, she shall not see it. Now, Fred, you must be on the alert; this letter is dated Florence, three weeks back, and he was doubtless on his way then to the Lago Magiore. Ascertain instantly what is doing there. You see he has discovered my real name, and may now put in force that cursed ——. But you will prevent this. I would myself come over, but I cannot quit the field with the battle almost won. Upon your exertions, therefore, I rely. Spare no means; use gold like wheat, but sow it properly. There is *nothing* that cannot be bought in Italy, if you go to the proper market. Remember this, and discover this accursed intruder, that he may feel what it is to cross the path of Leslie. I must gallop away my indignation—so farewell till the evening, when I must again let my feelings evaporate in thus epistolising you.

CHAPTER XXXII.

WHAT must be the sensations of a woman when she first feels the influence of a guilty love growing up in her heart, in spite of all her opposition; who strives, and finds that she strives in vain to stifle a flame to which her determination to master it only adds fuel? With what horror must a virtuous mind view its unabating progress, in spite of all her resistance, and feel barrier after barrier broken down, till there seems to be no escaping from the resistless torrent of a passion that threatens to overwhelm virtue, honor, and every thing that is valuable to woman, in its progress!

To feel the full influence of such a passion, and to feel and know the full measure of its guiltiness—to have the inclination to subdue its influence, and yet be sensible of the want of power to do so—to know the destroying effects of its progress, and yet to feel it march on, and on, and on, like the lava of a volcano, burning up every thing that is wholesome in its passage, till it requires an eternal watch upon the minutest action or circumstance, lest the senses betray the heart, and all be lost in an unguarded moment, is a misery, a wretchedness, a penance, which can be known by none but those who have been doomed to feel a guilty passion, and know it to be guilty, and to feel it to be irresistible.

It is in vain the heart turns to all its early recollections of virtue; in vain it contemplates the horror with which the same guilty feelings have been heard, and read of, and blamed, in others; and in vain a woman looks down the precipice, of which her being so near the brink, only renders the dangers more conspicuous, and from which these very dangers sometimes give the impetus to plunge into the abyss.

Like the traveller in the burning forest, who meets the raging flame at every turn he makes to attempt an escape, the victim flies to any opening that gives a glimmering hope, but recedes only more overpowered by the influence of the fire that threatens to consume him.

It is thus with the heart that suffers the first feelings of such a passion to obtain a temporary influence over the imagination. Like the lion's whelp, it may be crushed and destroyed in its infancy, but becomes the overpowering master, and tyrant, and destroyer in its maturity. In the commencement of this predicament did the unfortunate Agnes find herself. Nor was Leslie very wrong in his calculations on the state of her heart. Almost deserted by her husband—the husband of her young love—with all her best feelings thrown back upon themselves, and her warm heart and affections chilled by the increasing coldness of him to whom they were once devoted, and these affections outraged by infidelities which his love of fashion had rendered notorious, it is not much to be wondered at that Trevor's hold upon her heart should be loosened; and this once accomplished, it is astonishing the rapid progress that the violated feelings make towards indifference.

Leslie was also right in calculating that Agnes possessed a heart which could not long exist in a state of perfect indifference; he knew that deprived of the *appui* which she had looked for in her husband, that it would not be long before her heart would seek another; and although he had insiduously spoke of nothing but friendship, he was assured that if that sentiment were once attained, others and warmer ones, were likely to follow in the breast of one whose feelings were so acutely sensible as those of Agnes.

Agnes herself had no suspicion of the nature of her own sentiments; and had any body warned her of their tendency, and attempted to represent her danger, she would have laughed at the warning as useless, or spurned at the precaution as insulting. Surprised, however, into a discovery of the passion of Leslie for herself, the existence of which had never for a moment crossed her imagination, she trembled to find the effect it had upon her feelings; and shrunk from the consciousness that there was something in her own heart which prevented her from treating this discovery with the indignation which her sense of right, and propriety, and virtue, convinced her it deserved.

She felt as though she had been sleeping on a bed of flowers, and had heen awakened by a serpent; and it was in vain that she attempted to shut her eyes and dream again. The uproar of her feelings was too great to deceive her; and she blushed in agony to find the certainty of the only evil that could render her state more wretched. And then came the degrading recollection of her tacit consent to a falsehood; quite equal in her own correct ideas to the invention of the falsehood itself. She felt degraded in the eyes of her servants, in the opinion of Leslie, and, what was worse than all, in her own estimation; and yet she saw no way of remedying this evil that was not pregnant with danger to the lives of others and to her own reputa-

tion. What she was to do, became the first question, and her own sense of right and virtue, her increasing knowledge of the state of her own feelings, all suggested that a separation, a complete separation from Leslie, was absolutely necessary; and her false ideas of the generosity of his character induced her to imagine that she had only to hint that this was necessary to her comfort and peace of mind, to induce his peedy acquiescence.

At this moment she caught a glimpse of him through an opening in the park trees, galloping at a most furious rate; and, quitting the beaten road, she afterwards saw him take the country, clearing every thing in his progress. She had before witnessed this method of riding down his feelings, and she judged that this was his attempt at present. She was determined to make use of his absence to write her request; to speak it she found impossible. She might trust her handwriting, but she felt she could not trust her voice. She seized her pen, but found the task more difficult than she had imagined. Sheet after sheet was commenced and destroyed; it seemed to her impossible to express her ideas coolly, and as she considered they ought to be expressed. One letter, on a reperusal, appeared too kind, another too severe; and severity she did not think called for by an act that was involuntary, and by a discovery that had been purely accidental. She continued these attempts till the first bell rang: when finding herself still too much agitated to meet her party, she sent her apologies, and determined to pass the evening in her own room.

Leslie returned from his ride with his feelings of all kinds in some degree allayed by the violent exercise he had taken. He dressed himself quickly, and hurried into the drawing-room, anxious to see what would be his first reception from Agnes. His own conduct was quickly determined. He had clothed his features in humility and repentance; intended only to address her distantly; appear to avoid coming in contact with her, but at the same time contrive that she should catch his eyes fixed upon her when he might consider himself unobserved, with such an expression of deep affliction as, he thought, might induce her to view his passion "more in sorrow than in anger;" and this was all he anticipated at present. Once admitted to her confidence while she had a knowledge of his feelings, he thought his way would be easy.

With this view, he threw himself on a *fauteuil* in an attitude of deep abstraction, but still in a position where he could command the entrance. Every time the door opened, he cast an unobserved, inquiring glance; but no Agnes appeared: nor did he know, until the second bell rang and dinner was announced, that an apology had been made for her non-appearance. Thus his acting had been useless; but though disappointed in the speedy *eclaircissement* of the morning's interview, which the drawingroom might have afforded, he was rather induced to augur favorably for himself from her absence. If it arose from feeling unsubsided, there were hopes; if from anger, there were hopes still. Anything, he concluded, was better for him than the indifference that would bring her into society; and though even this temporary absence was heart-burning in the present situation of affairs, because it prevented his finding in her countenance something that might indicate the state of her mind, yet upon the whole, he was glad of it; and, being certain that she must meet the party who were to assemble the next day, he bore his present disappointment philosophically.

During the latter part of dinner, Leslie observed La Tour mingling with the servants who were in attendance; and surprised at the circumstance; for he knew that this was generally his *tête-à-tête* hour with Mrs. Flounce, he cast many inquiring glances at him as he officiously moved about the sideboard; but it was not till the desert had been placed on the table, and that the servants were retiring, that he caught La Tour's eye fixed upon him with that peculiar expression which always denoted that something of importance had happened; this look was accompanied by an almost imperceptible beckoning motion of the hand, and a slight shrug of the shoulders which seemed to say—"Lord! lord! what will this world come to?"

Leslie knew, by this movement of La Tour, that he was wanted; and he sat upon tenterhooks imagining, hoping, and fearing a thousand things till the retirement of the ladies gave him an opportunity, under the plea of sudden indisposition, to quit the dinner-room. Some time after which, he resumed his letter to Villars, as follows;—

LESLIE TO VILLARS. (In continuation.)

Well, Fred, I rode down my indignation as furiously as though this demon of the cramp handwriting had been under my horse's feet; or, like the felons of some country, the name of which I do not recollect, had been tied to his tail. I returned, but no Agnes. Illness—how these women lie when it serves their turn!—illness prevented her joining us during the evening. For illness read—what, Fred? what shall we read? Well, never mind, you shall judge. At the conclusion of dinner—by-the-by, the dullest of all dull dinners to me—La Tour favored me with one of those looks which you, as well as I, know so well, and which have summoned us to many a banquet of delight. Surprised and curious, you may imagine that I escaped as soon as possible. I found the faithful fellow waiting near the vestibule; he put on an important look, took out a key, and with the gravity of a real lord chamberlain, led the way to my dressing room, the door of which, to my surprise, he unlocked. I asked him why he had locked it? Still he gave me no answer, but ushering me into the room, pointed to a little pink note that lay on my dressing table. I won't tell you how my heart jumped at the sight; for, though there was no superscription, there was no doubting who was my correspondent. But how did it get there? Had Flounce brought it? No. Had the Lady given it to La Tour? No. How then? Why, with her usual delicacy, unwilling to trust a servant with her secret, she had been her own twopenny postman, and taking advantage of the dinner time, when she supposed every body of course engaged, had brought it herself. Think of this, Fred!—Agnes, the beautiful Agnes, the object of all my desires, in my dressing room! La Tour saw her—I hate

him for it. Concealed behind the drapery of a small bay window, he saw, by the reflection of a large glass, the door of the room gently open, and then shut. Surprised, he remained silent; in a moment it again opened, and Agnes—*mi lady*, as La Tour calls her—glided into the room; with a pale face, and in great agitation, she approached the dressing table, seemed to hesitate for a moment, deposited the note, then clasping her hands, and lifting up her eyes to heaven, she hastily quitted the apartment. By heavens, Fred, if the note itself were not at this moment laying before me, written on double wove gilt pink paper, I should doubt the evidence of my senses, and think it all a dream. Well, La Tour, without touching the note—he knew I would never have forgiven him if he had—immediately placed all my writing apparatus, with lights, ready for my reply; and, locking the apartment, even against herself, in case she should repent the step she had taken, came to summon me. Her visit to this room while it is mine, has given the apartment a delicious sweetness it never had before; the perfumes seem the sweeter, and the mirror which reflected her person, the brighter for her momentary presence. Oh, La Tour! what would I not have given to have been in your place! I quite hate the fellow for his good fortune. But to my note; you shall have it *verbatim*. Ma'amselle Scudery, now, would have headed it

THE BEAUTIFUL AGNES TO THE PERSEVERING LESLIE.

Now read, Fred, with attention.

"Oh, sir, to what a dreadful alternative has your imprudence reduced me! (Imprudence—only imprudence, you see, Fred.) Compelled, by the unhappy circumstances of this morning, either to give a tacit consent to the propagation of a falsehood, or, by the truth, to run the hazard of involving you and others, myself out of the question, in results, the idea of which makes me tremble, (ME, as well as others,) I have, to my shame and remorse, passively permitted the former; and, by my silence, have given a false colour to a transaction, which now, alas, I find it too late to remedy. Sunk in my own estimation, degraded in your opinion, (MY opinion, Fred; you see she wishes to be well with me,) perhaps exposed to the suspicions of my servant, I see but one way—one only way, to act, so as to extricate myself from the dreadful dilemma in which these circumstances have placed me, (I could point out another, couldn't I, Fred?) and that is, to implore your immediate absence; and I am sensible that, in appealing to the heart and good feeling of Sir Robert Leslie, I shall not appeal in vain, as he must feel the imperious necessity for his departure as much as I do. (Imperious necessity, Fred!) I reproach you not. I feel all the obligations which a series of kindnesses have conferred on myself and another; let me, oh let me, sir, attribute them to the only legitimate source from which they ought to have sprung; they shall then be alone remembered, and that scene of this morning buried in oblivion. (Shall it?) You will perhaps say that your sudden departure might create surprise; (you see she finds an apology for my deferring it,) but there are many circumstances to which it may be attributed; (you see she can counsel a little lying upon occasion,) and I am sure when you know that it is necessary to the peace of one in whose real happiness you have hitherto appeared to take an interest, you will not refuse to depart instantly. (How inhospitable in her own house!) The step I am now taking may be blamed; but as the circumstances themselves preclude the possibility of conversation, (why, pray?) I feel myself justified in adopting it; and I feel, also, that I am confiding in a man of honor, who will do his utmost to obliterate the effects of an involuntary error."

There, Fred. As Byron says,

> This note is written upon gilt-edged paper,
> With a neat little crow-quill, slight and new;
> Her small white hand could hardly reach the taper,
> It trembled as magnetic needles do.

And that her hand did tremble, the zig-zag direction of every line evinces; and just where the "series of my kindnesses" is alluded to, there's a blot, and the ink is a little lighter-collored, as though there had been a tear mingled with it, and hastily brushed away. Women will sometimes shed them on the like occasions.

Well, Fred, I have weighed every word of this epistle—nay, every letter—with the accuracy of an alchemist transmuting his materials into the precious metal for which he has sold himself to Satan; and with more success than the deluded philosopher, since I think I can extract from this letter the "golden hope" that——I may not despair.

But to go! To quit her! No, no, Agnes. I never obeyed a woman but once in this particular; and what did I get for it, some years afterwards, but laughter and reproaches? But I was then a boy; I am now a man, and know my advantages too well to throw them away.

Your dense understanding, Fred, will, I dare say, never discover, in the delicacy of this letter—in the command it contains—in the very slight allusion it makes to my offence—the hope that I derive from it; but these are things which speak to the heart of the lover himself, and to the understandings of nobody else. Well, I must now reply; and what do you think that reply will be? It will be to consent to her proposition, to promise anything she wishes, to vow absolute obedience to her behests. Vows? say you. Yes, Fred, such vows as men always make and women always believe. I will then make my obedience depend on an interview—a last interview I will call it—and I will urge such reasons for this interview—such pungent reasons, Fred—that she shall think it quite right and proper to grant it; and if she does——why—why then—Good bye, Fred.

Leslie devoted a greater part of the night to the composition of such a letter as would convince Agnes of the sincerity of his intentions, without denying the truth of her discovery. He adopted her phrase, and represented the "involuntary" nature of his offence, and that it carried its own punishment in the never-ending agony which it must create in such a heart at his. Then followed the promise to obey her, and the request for one interview, that her advice might strengthen his

resolution: and without this, he adverted to the fears of the absolute impossibility of his obedience.

The Letter once finished, the next step was the delivery. Servants, he saw, were not the proper medium. His only hopè of her accepting it at all, was her being impressed with certainty that their communication was known to no one but themselves. This had, no doubt, been her only motive for bringing her own note herself. He must, therefore, deliver it into her own hands, or place it where it could be seen by no one else.

He knew that the next day, it being the intention to receive several of the gentry, who had interest in the county, that she must be early in the morning-room. La Tour was therefore placed so as to give him notice of her appearance. The instant he heard she was there, he dressed himself negligently, and, having ascertained from his glass, that his privation from sleep had given a cast of languor and paleness to his countenance, he added to this an appearance of sorrow and repentance well calculated to make the impression he desired, and joined the party.

Agnes was seated on an ottoman, with her head hanging over a portfolio of prints: to which Leslie, with his usual quickness, perceived she was paying no attention.

At his entrance, which she seemed to feel, rather than to see, the eloquent blood rushed into her face, but receded as quickly to her heart, leaving her countenance pale as parian marble. She attempted to rise as he slowly, and in a voice scarcely audible, "hoped that her indisposition had passed away." Her reply only trembled on her lips—the sounds were not embodied into words; and she resumed her contemplation of the prints in which he apparently joined her. Every body else in the room was too much occupied in their pursuits to have leisure for observation on those of others.

Leslie and Agnes were silent; but it was the silence of thought and feeling. Her hand mechanically turned over the plates in the folio, and that of Leslie as mechanically assisted her. Her eye was averted—his fixed upon her countenance with an earnestness that would have perused her soul. Suddenly she started; she saw a letter lie on the print before her. She cast a hasty glance of indignation at Leslie, and saw him standing, pale, and silent, with his hands clasped, in an attitude of respectful supplication. His position was such, that none could see the letter besides himself. A moment might bring some one else to join them in looking over the portfolio. Her dread of the letter's being seen, was quite as great as any other by which she was assailed. It was impossible, she saw, for Leslie to resume it unperceived, and quite as impossible to leave it there. Leslie lifted up the next print so as to preclude the possibility of observation, and, by slanting its position, he contrived to place the letter near her handkerchief and gloves, which lay at the edge of the portfolio. Agnes covered the letter with her handkerchief, and took them both up, while her whole neck and countenance were suffused with a burning blush. Leslie's heart beat audibly, and an expression of triumph stole into his dark eye in spite of his caution and his self-command: but it was unperceived by Agnes.

When the agitation of the moment had a little subsided, Leslie whispered in her ear; "Read it quickly; its perusal is absolutely necessary. It will set your mind at ease; it will restore the tranquillity I have so wantonly destroyed. Grant the request it contains, and whatever your commands are they shall be obeyed." So saying, he left the room, as though unable longer to control his own feelings, and apparently out of respect to hers.

He had said this lest it should be her intention to return his letter unopened.

Conscious as Agnes was of the innocence of her own intentions, and of the peculiarity of the circumstances that rendered her reception of the letter necessary, she yet experienced all the agitations of guilt, and kept her glance riveted on the engraving before her, afraid lest, in looking up, she should encounter some eye fixed upon her with suspicion, or with scorn.

Nothing, however, had been observed; and in a short time she sought the solitude of her own apartment, to deliberate whether the letter should be perused or returned unopened.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

LESLIE TO VILLARS.

Ce n'est que le premier pas qui coûte—"When a woman hesitates, she's lost." Oh, Villars! Villars! how am I trying at this moment to argue myself into a thorough belief of the truth of these aphorisms! for if they *are* true, then is the most lovely she that nature ever formed—then is the woman who has excited this volcano in my mind, and has made my heart overflow with a passion hot as the burning lava of Vesuvius—mine. Yes, Villars, mine!—mine!—mine! three times mine; and yet not once! But I must be cool—I must not lose my generalship: keep down, thou beating, rebel heart, to the principles of that *sang-froid* which can take advantage of the passions of others to gratify one's own. But where the devil am I wandering? This must be Greek to you, Villars; and yet it is no dead language, but the living language of a living, beating, thrice-alive heart.

Thus wrote Leslie, and thus he proceeded:

Would you believe it, Villars? this woman, this paragon of beauty and virtue; this creature of flesh and blood, and warmth and life, has consented to give me an interview.

And yet why should you not believe it? are not all the sex the same? is there not a way to every woman's heart? and the only difficulty is to know how to pave it properly. Yes, yes.

> Experience finds
> That sundry women are of sundry minds,
> With various crotchets filled, and hard to please,
> They therefore must be caught by various ways;

and I have found the way at last to this most impregnable of female hearts.

An interview, Villars, at night—in a grove—amidst trees that whisper only to the zephyrs, and zephyrs tell no tales—not far from the ocean, whose gentle murmurs are the best accompaniments for lovers' vows, because they come sweeping over the sands, washing out the traces of all things there, and sink back into the fathomless ocean that produced them. There is a cascade too, that comes tumbling from one of the neighboring heights till it reaches the sea. A cascade! emblematical of a fall. 'Tis the sixth day of the month, too, and you recollect the Roman proverb—

Sub sextis semper perdita Roma fuit

How I catch at every thing that affords a hope! Be still, my heart. But Villars, isn't this a *premier pas?* Is not this hesitation? Do you think, Fred, these blessed aphorisms *are* true?

What a tumult am I in! one would suppose that this was the first passion I had ever felt; the first woman I had ever met. Then time too—my watch stands still; I hate the sun. Joshua seems to have revisited the earth, and again to have exerted his power over its great luminary. And I have to go through the fatigue of a damned dinner, too; the parade of folly; the cant of society; the nothingness of ceremony and politeness: my watch *does* stand still; and night will never come.

What is she doing now? I would give worlds, if I had the invisible powers of the fairy ring, to see her in her *boudoir*. Imagination paints her still trembling and hesitating, half-repenting, yet still determined. Perhaps, too, she has some of the burning anticipations which consume me; the same eager impatience for the coming hour. Her hour, perhaps, must come! and if hers, mine! Dost think, Villars, that our thoughts are really meeting in the grove, where she has promised our persons shall meet so soon. Soon did I call it? it is an age, twenty ages till then.

Dost think that she paints to her mind's eye the shady cypress? for there *is* a cypress—that is, a funeral tree, is it not? emblematical of something that must die and be buried. Can this be ominous? Can its omen have any reference to her virtue and repentance? We shall see.

Perhaps at this moment the gurgling waters sound in her ear; the moonlight already sleeps upon the bank; all is hushed; and her imagination may be painting the interview according to my wishes, and to my intentions.

Intentions! but I am not pledged—have I not promised? Well, and have I not been pledged, and have I not promised before! Promises, forsooth—and to a woman!

——————I have made a thousand of them.
They are things indifferent, whether kept or broken,
Mere venial slips, that grow not near the conscience.

And who ever was a bit the worse, or a bit the wiser, because I forfeited the pledge or broke the promise? I beg their pardon, they *were* the *wiser;* or it was their own fault.

But is not Trevor your friend, say you? Certainly not; for he has married the only woman I ever could have married, had I been inclined to wear the yoke of matrimony.

Friend, indeed! It is true, we have intrigued together, got drunk together—our debaucheries have been in common, we have met at the same gaming-tables, we have committed the same follies; participated in each others vices; but is this friendship?

Had the fellow bivouacked with me night after night under the same planets on the cold snow-bed; been by my side on a forlorn hope; mounted a breach with me in the face of the enemy's fire; or followed me in a charge of cavalry into the ranks of a hollow square, as thou hast done, then indeed I might have thought for half an hour before I attempted his wife.

And this I say, Villars, to give you security in case your broad shoulders should ever be tempted into the pale of matrimony; in case you should ever be condemned to hear a lawn-sleeved surpliced rogue, whom perhaps we recollect a drunken dog at Oxford, mumble over the ceremony which so appropriately begins with "Dearly beloved," and ends with "amazement."

Then it is under his own roof; and this you will say is a breach of hospitality; but can that be called a violation of hospitality, which only shows your appreciation of your hostess?

Besides, it is not hospitality that courts me here—'tis vanity. He knew that to have "Sir Robert Leslie," was the most certain method of filling his house with that circle out of which he cannot live: and here I am. Am I to be here without renumeration? Am I to lend my attraction gratis. Certainly not. Therefore, Trevor must pay for his vanity, as other people pay for their playthings; and if he pays rather too dearly, why he may perhaps benefit by the lesson to the end of his life, and that will balance our account.

Depend upon it, Villars, that the man who will introduce such fellows as you and I are to his wife—and that such a wife—is not to be pitied. We must speak the truth sometimes, Fred, and neither you nor I are blind to our merits. Besides, suppose a case—A, has a treasure, which, though a real treasure, is valueless in his eyes, and he not only does not appreciate it, but he neglects it, and leaves it about for every little purloiner to attempt its larceny. B, on the contrary, knows the value of this treasure; covets it with all his soul, intends to cherish it, and with such intentions, lays a plan for obtaining it out of unworthy hands. The *ergo* I leave to you, Fred.

This last tirade I believe to be partly owing to that sapient sentence in your last, in which you say that while I treat Trevor in this manner, what security have you in case of marriage? But I have proved that I think this quite a different matter; and yet, by my soul, Fred, your suggestion set my fancy gadding, and I began to think what sort of a woman you would choose, and whether I should like her; and then I felt a kind of involuntary chuckling in my throat, not unlike a laugh, and I thought that the "Honorable Mrs. Frederick Villars," at full length, would not look badly in my list—I dreamed about it, too. Upon the whole, I wish you had not put it into my head. However, it does not matter, as you have no intention

of marrying. Let me know if you have, and I'll grow better.

How I wish I could obey my worthy grandfather's lesson and take old Time by the fore-lock, and pull him on a little.

Ah! the first bell: time does get on; my watch does not stand still: La Tour---La Tour! *depêche-toi donc.* I shall soon see my charmer, soon see her eyes for the first time cast down with a consciousness of something that she never felt before; for I am more than ever convinced that such a fellow as Trevor is, could never awaken all the sensibilities of such a heart as hers. There are, I am sure there are, a thousand hidden feelings—a thousand concealed sensations, of which she is herself unconscious, and which it requires but a master-hand to call into existence.

Be it my task to awaken the sleeping tempters. Be it my task to teach her of what her heart is capable; and to call up in the paths of passion a thousand fragrant flowers, which I shall crop, as they spring into blossom, in all their freshness, under the genial influence of my own kisses.

What a pity it is that they will not last; is it not, Fred? But this is not our fault; 'tis nature's fault, or perhaps her virtue, to give a zest to novelty and variety.

And then, too, what has been novel to us may preserve its novelty to others, you know; and thus the giddy round of life is run,

My heart becomes easy, now I see that time does not absolutely stand still.

Here is La Tour; so now for my toilet, and adieu till—till when; why, till *then.* If thou canst not guess the meaning of that "THEN," thou art a more stupid clod of your mother-earth than I take you for.

La Tour now spread out the silk stockings, the combs, the brushes, the silver-mounted dressing-case, and the gold-handled razors, together with all the *et-ceteræ* of a perfect gentleman's toilet, which is almost as elaborate in its appointments, as that of the most capricious lady of fashion.

Leslie was no effeminate coxcomb, but he knew very well the full value of person, and he consequently made its preservation and adornment his care as far as directing La Tour to study every thing that could tend to those objects that did not degenerate into effeminacy.

He knew, too, that the dressing rooms of their masters and mistresses were frequently the conversation of the servants in the steward's room, and he had experienced that these conversations frequently met the ears of the masters and mistresses themselves; and he was conscious that an elaborate and attentive toilet was never lost upon the mind of any female who heard of it by accident. He never missed a point; and tried to be as great a man to his valet in the retirement of his dressing room, as he was to the society by which he was surrounded in the publicity of the drawing room. And here let me recommend his example in this particular to both sexes; nay, even when alone, act always in all particulars as though the eyes of society were upon you. Preserve all the etiquettes of life when alone and in your family, and they sit easily and gracefully upon you in public; while if you relax from their observance in your private hours, your manners appear when put on to sit awkwardly, like the Sunday clothes of a linen draper's apprentice.

While Leslie was thus occupying his mind, and amusing his impatience by attention to his toilette, Agnes sat almost unconscious before hers.

Her mind was absorbed in the contemplation of the step she had taken. It was in vain that she reviewed all the arguments which had induced her to consent to the interview. In vain she spread out the whole tissue of conclusions and deductions which had led to it; what she had thought solid, now appeared flimsy; and not even her innate knowledge that she was instigated by a virtuous motive, could reconcile her to the step she had taken.

Perhaps, also, her heart began to tell her too loudly, that Leslie was not quite indifferent to it; perhaps she began to find that all the warm feelings of which she had once been so proud, had only slumbered, and had not been extinguished; perhaps she began to experience sensations which sent her heart's blood up into her cheek; but this, instead of encouraging and tempting her, alarmed her. The chord was again struck, but she was determined to crush its vibrations, and banish the enterprising hand that had dared to strike it.

It was in vain that Mrs. Flounce spread out the costly dresses of her wardrobe, to tempt her choice: and in vain that she reminded her, again and again, that the dressing-bell had sounded.

Agnes was too much absorbed in her own reflections—too much terrified at her own sensations—to give any thought to the routine of common things.

She was, therefore, dressed after her maid's own taste; and, as the second bell rang, she moved almost unconsciously and mechanically, towards the drawing-room, still undetermined whether to keep or break her appointment.

What a contrast between the two! The one plotting and planning, and thinking upon destruction; the other insensible of danger, yet dreading she knew not what. The destroyer attending to all the *minutiæ* of the toilet; and the intended victim insensible, and careless of any thing but that which absorbed her mind.

When she entered the room the party were all assembled, and her entrance was the signal for the announcement of dinner.

Leslie was leaning against the side of a window, with his eye fixed impatiently on the door. Their eyes met as she entered, but hers were immediately withdrawn; and she seized the arm of an old peer, who stood immediately near the door, and selected him as her escort to the dinner-table.

Leslie bit his lip, but offered his arm to Lady Mary Trentham. Trevor, as usual, walked off with Lady Flora; and the rest of the guests paired off either as they had premeditated, or promiscuously according to circumstances.

During dinner, Leslie, in spite of the light artillery with which he was attacked by Lady Mary Trentham and his opposite neighbors, did not fail to fix his eye occasionally on Mrs. Tre-

vor, who sat, almost silent, at the head of the table.

As he observed her downcast looks and evident absorption, he trembled for her determination as to her appointment; but as hers was not a mind that could lightly promise, he trusted to its performance, and betook himself to meet and return the fire of his fair adversaries, who were rallying him upon his insensibility to their attractions, and to the example which he held out to other young men who would imitate him.

Trevor flirted openly with Lady Flora, who, by her bold manners, and evident pleasure at his attentions, gave occasion to many significant shrugs and uplifted eyes from the silent consumers of the delicacies before them. Surely, thought Leslie, she cannot be so much above her sex as to view this with indifference? and he immediately, but artfully, tried various ways to attract her attention to the behavior of her husband, but without success; or, if she did observe it, it was with that high-souled indifference that never suggested the thought of retaliation, with which Leslie was in hopes she might be inspired.

Trevor continued to give Lady Flora his undivided attention, and Agnes was constrained to keep up a desultory conversation with the elderly peer, who had handed her down, and the new member for the county on her left, while Leslie was martyrizing under the pretty conceits of his fair companion, and watching with scrutinizing though furtive glances, the various changes of countenance which were exhibited on that face which was really the "tell-tale" of the mind within.

At length Agnes rose, and gloves, fans, and *vinaigrettes*, were collected by the ladies, who followed her.

Leslie caught her eye once in the general move, but it spoke nothing by which he could interpret her intentions.

He rushed to the door, and was luckily in time to open it for the retreating fair ones, thinking he might receive some signal, some slight recognition of the engagement; but she passed without giving any, and he closed the door upon the rustling silks with an agony of uncertainty and impatience.

The gentlemen now gave themselves up much more freely to the bottle than is generally the present usage in London.

Leslie, wrapt up in himself, did not join in the conversation. He was too restless, too impatient, too uncertain of the events of the night. His passions were up with expectation; his heart was on fire with the project he meditated, and he had the utmost difficulty to control his feelings so that they should not betray his anxiety.

CHAPTER XXXIV

The place that Leslie had named in his letter for the interview was a favorite spot with Agnes, and one to which he knew she was in the habit of resorting on moonlight nights, to seek some relief from the heartless set with which her own drawing-room was so frequently filled, in the contemplation of the beautiful scenery which surrounded it; and here he had frequently seen her in the height of her feeling give way to paroxysms of sorrow at the disappointment of her hopes. He was aware that during the nights when the moon was brightest her habit of walking alone had been so constant, that her absence from the drawing-room would pass unobserved, and he knew that she would think this likewise. It was therefore that he named this place and hour.

The spot thus selected by Agnes as the solitary temple of her sorrows, had, alas! been one of those which had been the scene of her pleasures in the early period of her marriage. Its beauties had struck her on her first visit to Trevor Hall, and it was there that she had then realized many of her anticipations of happiness with her husband. It was there that he had joined with her in her enthusiastic admiration of nature; had read to her, listened to her guitar, or sat with her in all the silence of pleasure, lulled into a forgetfulness of every thing but themselves and their present happiness, by the surge of the wave, as it dashed against the cliff; or by the cascade, as it tumbled down the mountain in the ocean. Had Leslie been aware of this, he would not perhaps have named such a place as the scene of their interview.

The spot itself was far removed from the generally frequented parts of the park, being at the back of one of those large plantations which had grown for ages on the brow of a hill overlooking the sea. A small lawn was here overshadowed by the high trees by which it was surrounded, and the care that, by the commands of Agnes, had been bestowed upon it, preserved the grass in all its verdant freshness, in spite of its proximity to the ocean, towards which the lawn shelved down gradually; while to the right and left rose the natural ramparts of the sea, from one of which rolled the cascade which Leslie had mentioned in his letter to Villars.

Several small banks of turf, surrounded by flowers, had been created by the command of Agnes; and a small Corinthian temple had likewise been erected in this little arena of beauties, to which there was access only by one or two almost imperceptible avenues through the ancient oaks and elms, which with their dark foliage, formed a fine contrast with the bright and smooth lawn beneath them.

This was the place selected by Leslie for his interview with Agnes; and it was here, under the bright canopy of heaven, that she, in the consciousness of her own innocence, had consented to see him on before his departure.

On quitting the dinner-table, Leslie had entered the drawing-room, with an anxious and trembling step, dreading lest the first object which might strike him should be Agnes unprepared for the interview. An agitated glance around the room convinced him in a moment that she was not there, and gave him additional hope of the performance of her original intention.

He walked in the direction of the place ap-

pointed, and sought for some temporary relief from the violence and impatience of his feelings in the contemplation of the scene which he hoped might witness the accomplishment of his wishes. He amused, or rather occupied himself in inspecting the environs, to ascertain that there was no intruder, and to make himself perfectly acquainted with the topography of the spot; and by the time he had placed himself on the steps of the temple, he felt that he was "himself again" in every thing, but the anxiety he experienced lest she should not keep her appointment.

It was one of those clear bright nights which seldom visit our northern atmosphere; not a cloud was to be seen, but the whole sky was studded so numerously with stars, that the head became nearly dizzy with their contemplation: amidst them the bright moon, which had nearly "filled her circling orb," moved slowly, calmly, and solemnly, throwing her white radiance in one large undulating column upon the sparkling waters of the ocean, while its brightness trembled on the foliage of the majestic trees that bowed to the whispering of a warm autumnal breeze.

As Leslie looked around he felt that everything conspired in his favor; the solemn stillness—the bright moonlight—the murmuring of the waters—the distant sound of the music from the house, which at intervals broke upon the ear, all united, gave the scene that voluptuousness of nature which art can never imitate. All this had little effect upon his own feelings; but he knew from experience the influence it was likely to have on a young and romantic mind, and on a heart so unsullied as that of Agnes. Leslie was now quite cool, and struck his repeater, for his impatience suggested that the time appointed must be near at hand. "Seven—eight—one—two—three quarters," counted he aloud. "No, not yet," said he, and he almost doubted the correctness of his watch; but it was correct, for no timepiece keeps truer time than a lover's, at least before success has crowned his pursuit; afterwards, Leslie had sometimes found his half an hour too slow. A slight agitation from the trees, by the wind, made him start in that direction, lest any intruder might be near to interrupt them. All was, however, again quiet.

"No," said he, in soliloquy; "there are no eyes but those of the stars to gaze upon a lover's transports, or to witness a lady's blushes; nothing but the whisperings of the breeze to betray them."

He struck his repeater again, and the hour of appointment sounded; still nothing indicated the approach of Agnes.

"But will she come?" said he again, and a sickness came over his heart at the apprehension which this question created. "Will no intervening scruple, no impertinent conscience, with its whispers of conjugal duty, step in and disappoint me? Yet, no—no," pursued he, "she thinks I come here to take my leave for ever. She imagines me struggling between passion and duty—she thinks she comes to confirm me in a virtuous resolution, and will not fail; the very edge of the precipice is decorated with flowers, and the gulf below is hid by heartsease."

Thus soliloquised Leslie, *sotto voce*, when he evidently heard footsteps fast approaching the spot in which the sound came. He rushed in the direction—his heart beating with rapture—his soul all expectation—when, at the entrance to the plantation, he met—not Mrs. Trevor, but to his horror, Trevor himself, in a state of intoxication! Leslie, in his impatience, had approached too near to him to escape; indeed, had nearly seized his hand ere he had discovered his mistake.

"Curse these—winding paths. I've missed—my way. Eh, Leslie! why, what brings you here, man?" stammered Trevor.

This question set Leslie's fears that his intrusion was intended at rest. Curses rose to his lips but prudence repressed them.

"Oh, nothing—nothing but my love of solitude and scenery," replied he.

"Love of solitude and scenery—no—no," said Trevor. "I don't believe that—they are no loves of yours. 'Tis some woman—some intrigue now I know—some damned intrigue; and you are playing me false."

"Playing *you* false!" exclaimed Leslie, alarmed at this speech from his own consciousness of its truth.

"Yes, Leslie, for not confiding in me. Are we not brothers in arms? Come, now, tell me who it is: you know me too well to imagine I would interrupt or betray any thing of the sort," hiccuped out Trevor.

"No—no—not now for heaven's sake!" exclaimed Leslie, impatient for his departure, and fearful that Agnes might hear him, and retreat without granting him the desired interview.

"Let me see," said Trevor, with that obstinacy which sometimes characterises drunkenness, "who have we in the house? There's Lady Freelove—no—no—it isn't her. There is——"

"Nay—nay—you shall know all to-morrow—all—all—but begone now!" again exclaimed Leslie, almost in a passion with his impatience.

"If she is a married woman," continued Trevor, "you may tell me safely; and her husband shall never be a jot the wiser."

"No—no. In this instance I trust the husband never will be a jot the wiser," said Leslie. "But begone, or you'll ruin all."

And if I go, you will ruin——"

Leslie, at this moment thinking he heard a noise among the trees, and that he caught a glimpse of female drapery, seized Trevor, and forcibly urged him to the other side of the lawn; during which operation the remembrance of his own object in leaving the house seemed to recur to Trevor's mind, and he uttered an indistinct inquiry if Leslie had seen any thing of Lady Flora?

Leslie saw the whole affair in its right light in an instant; and declaring that he had seen Lady Flora quit the terrace in the front of the drawing room, and direct her steps towards an aviary in quite a different part of the park, he contrived, to his great joy, to get rid of the unwelcome intruder. Still, however, there was no appearance of Agnes; and he began to fear that she had indeed come during the unexpected visit of her husband, and had been frightened from her purpose.

Agnes, in the meantime, sat anxiously in her dressing room, still irresolute whether she should keep or break the appointment. Her consciousness of the rectitude of her intentions could not hide

from her a deep sense of the impropriety and danger of the step she was about to take. Yet she saw no other method by which she could urge the necessity of Leslie's departure, and secure his obedience to her wishes, unless she made a confident of her husband, and accomplished them through him. This was a scheme, however, too pregnant with danger for her to think of; and yet it was the only one she ought to have pursued. No consideration for a husband's safety should, in a wife, induce the concealment of any thing prejudicial to his honor.

As Leslie watched the progress of the clock, impatient at the slow progress of time, so Agnes watched the *pendule* on her chimney piece with precisely the contrary feeling. She wished for the power of arresting its progress; she wished that the appointed hour which called for her decision might never come. As minutes had appeared hours to Leslie, so did the intervals between the quarters of each, by her time-piece, appear but as moments to Agnes. As the time approached, her agitation increased; and as she counted it at last striking the hour as though it had been her knell, every stroke of the clock went to her heart, and she almost gasped for breath. For a moment she determined to break her appointment; and threw herself on the sofa in a vain attempt to calm her agitation.

As minute after minute rolled on, however, she again began to hesitate. Imagination pictured the agony of Leslie; she bethought her how involuntary had been his crime, and that it was no fault of his that it had come to her knowledge. His forbearance, his respect, his prudence, through the long series of months that this passion had been preying upon his heart—for the discovery had been made in such a way that could leave do doubt upon her mind as to the strength and sincerity and duration of his affection—gave her confidence in his honor. The idea that her influence might confirm him in the resolution to leave her, not unmixed perhaps, that an interview might in some measure soothe his agony, without compromising herself, all rushed upon her thoughts at once, and overturned the resolution she had almost taken not to attend her appointment. It was now nearly a quarter past nine. She seized a new Cashmere, that had arrived from town that very morning, and which had been ostentatiously displayed by Flounce over the cheval glass—again hesitated—then hastily wrapping it around her as though fearful of her own resolution, she hurried through the casement that opened upon the terrace, and hastened to the place of rendezvous.

The beauty of the night—the brightness of the moon—the myriads of stars were unheeded by her. Every thing was calm without, every thing turbulent within. Her heart palpitated, so that it almost impeded her progress. All her senses seemed to have derived an additional degree of acuteness. The falling of a leaf, as she passed through the trees, appeared to her imagination almost like a peal of thunder. She felt that if she suffered herself to think, she should even now turn back—and she did not think.

The impatient Leslie was pacing the lawn with rapid strikes, cursing Trevor for his disappointment, and almost ready in his passion to dash his head against the trees; for he had given up all hopes of her coming. When he heard her approach, he rushed to the entrance from the plantation, and was doomed this time not to be disappointed.

Breathless from his late agitation, and from the quick transition of his feelings, it was some moments before he could utter a word. Agnes herself trembled too much to break a silence, which was only interrupted by the beating of their hearts.

At their first encounter, Leslie had seized her hand; and she had, almost unconsciously, permitted him to retain it. At length, in that whisper which is so indicative of high-wrought passion, he exclaimed—"My sweet friend, this is indeed kind! How shall I be grateful enough for this goodness—how shall I repay your confidence?"

"O! Sir Robert Leslie," Agnes replied, with trembling, "Nay—nay—release my hand."

"How can I, when it trembles so," said Leslie. "Repose with confidence on my arm—tranquillize your spirits."

"Presently—presently," replied Agnes. "Pardon this agitation. Do not think ill of me, Sir Robert, for thus complying with your request——"

"Can my sweet friend—can Mrs. Trevor think me so ungrateful," interrupted Leslie. "Rather let me thank you on my knees for your condescension."

"Oh! no—no—no," exclaimed Agnes, as with both hands she prevented his assuming the attitude his words threatened. "Let me collect my scattered senses. You must leave me."

"Leave you?"

"Yes!" pursued Agnes. "Accident has betrayed that which I ought never to have known; but knowing it—it would be a crime to encourage your presence. I am here merely to claim your promise of quitting me for ever."

"Quit you!" exclaimed Leslie. "Well—I must bow to your commands; but tell me—oh! tell me where is the necessity for an exertion that must destroy me. My feelings are unsuspected by the whole world. You are uninfluenced by them, except in the kindness of your pity. Can you not depend on a discretion which has preserved the secret even from you for months? Can you doubt the prudence which has hitherto kept down feelings, the fervor of which has almost broke my heart?"

"Oh!—no—no—no," replied Agnes, with increasing agitation. "But my honor—my peace of mind—require it."

"Nay—nay; but none—none—will know it," said Leslie.

"Oh!—yes—yes, there will be *one;* and my own consciousness would imagine the truth in every eye that looked upon me—would interpret every observation into a sneer, and transform the smiles of friendship into those of pity or of scorn—" and her voice faltered still more.

"Nay—nay—my sweet friend:" and Leslie, who had not relinquished her hand, drew her closer to him; "this is indeed too fastidious; this is unlike yourself, to sacrifice so much to a foolish and heartless world. Think upon all I have suffered—all that I must suffer. Recollect that accident alone betrayed the knowledge of my passion!"

"Hold Sir Robert Leslie!" and Agnes spoke with

more energy than she had yet exerted; "it is true, I do owe this unhappy knowledge to accident. That was neither your blame nor mine; but for you to speak it is insult—for me to listen to it is crime."

"Nay—nay;" and Leslie's passion got the better of his *sang-froid:* "Can that be crime which is the impulse of the heart? Can that be deemed insult which is the emanation of the purest passion, and which has been engendered hy the contemplation of goodness and loveliness pining under the undeserved neglect——"

"Sir Robert Leslie, I will not hear you!" exclaimed Agnes.

"Nay," pursued Leslie, "but your husband ——"

"Is your friend, and trusts you," interrupted Agnes. "I came, Sir Robert Leslie, relying on your letter; to confirm you in a virtuous resolution; keep it, Sir, for your own sake—for *mine*"—and her voice again became tremulous. Her energy was gone, and Leslie felt it.

"But Agnes"——and he would have proceeded, but she drew herself up in a moment, and with dignity interrupted him, by saying, proudly, "Mistress Trevor, sir, that is my name, and it shall never be disgraced by me. Leave me—permit me to depart: I have done wrong—I feel it; but leave me—leave me, sir, to the bitterness of my repentance and my tears;" and Agnes wept.

Although she had begun this last sentence with firmness, her voice sunk into womanly tenderness at the conclusion; and as she uttered the word "tears," Leslie felt the burning drops of them on his hand. He felt also the advantage he had gained: he could not doubt but that there were feelings for him struggling in her heart; and calculating upon what he had met with in other women, he determined to persevere.

"Tears—tears—my sweet friend: what occasion is there for tears," exclaimed he, "where all may be smiles: the involuntary knowledge of my love is no crime in you: my attention to others will blind the world——"

"And what will blind my own conscience?" exclaimed she, with agony. "Go, sir; and if to have added another pang to an already suffering heart can be a triumph, enjoy it—it is yours."

"Nay, nay;" and he drew her more closely to him.

"Unhand me, I insist—I implore——"

At this moment, the tread of heavy footsteps approaching alarmed them both. Agnes, in an agony of terror, heard her husband's voice, and would have fled, but that her feet seemed to refuse their office; she could only reach the steps of the temple, on which she sank, exhausted and fainting, while Leslie still preserved sufficient presence of mind to intercept Trevor at the entrance of the lawn.

He had sought in vain for Lady Flora—had returned to the dinner table, swallowed three or four more bumpers; and then, not finding her in the drawing room, and still imagining that she was expecting him, had again unconsciously wandered towards the lawn where he had left Leslie.

Leslie's passions were at their height; the scalding tear upon his hand had acted like lightning; the dominion of his lust was upon him; he had touched Agnes; touched her while his heart and mind were bent on her possession; and the collision had set his senses in a blaze. He seized Trevor's arm with an energy that almost startled him out of his intoxication. He felt that he could have dashed him from the precipice into the ocean for this interruption, and would have done it but that, amidst all the frenzy of his passion, he recollected that by making her a widow, he should cut off every hope of possessing Agnes, excepting as a wife.

It was the peculiar characteristic of Leslie's mind, that in the very height and tide of his feelings, his coolness and calculation seldom forsook him.

To Leslie's fierce question of what brought him there again, Trevor stammered some excuse about Lady Flora, which Leslie was not sorry that Agnes should hear.

"My dear Leslie," said he, "I beg your pardon; I did not mean to intrude; but somehow or other—curse me if I can find Lady Flora—I mean, I can't find my way; and then, for the first time seeing Agnes, "Eh! oh, she is come; Leslie, you are a lucky rogue. I beg your pardon;" and then approaching Agnes, who had just sense enough to wrap herself up closer in her shawl, he continued, with a bow that almost sent him prostrate, "Madam, I beg ten thousand pardons."

"'Sdeath, man!" said Leslie; "away with you; as a man of honor, as a gentleman, away with you, instantly, and be contented with the mischief you have done."

"But I say, Leslie," pertinaciously continued Trevor, the lady's ill; perhaps I can be of service;" and he again turned towards Agnes, with "I beg ten thousand pardons," but was whirled round by Leslie. "You want nerve, Leslie, you do indeed; let me see the lady to the house. Her cha—a—racter will be quite—qui—ite sa—afe with me. I'll keep the secret as religiously as though it were my own."

"Away! away! Trevor," said Leslie, quite conquered by his feelings, in a voice of suppressed passion, "unless you wish to quarrel with me; and by G—, that must and shall be the case, if you stop another instant!"

"I'm off, my dear fellow—don't be in a passion—I am off," said Trevor, and he reeled towards the plantation, and went in the direction of the house, muttering to himself, unheard by Leslie, "Hem—doens't want me to know who she is; but I marked the Cashmere shawl—white and silver—thanks to the moon—and shall soon find out the wearer."

The moment Trevor was gone Leslie rushed towards Agnes. But she was already upon her feet, supporting herself on one of the pedestals of the temple, before he could reach her. One hand rested on the balustrade, while the other was lifted up to heaven. Her countenance was upturned in the same direction. Every thing was motionless about her except her heart and lips; the one beat tumultuously, the other moved in some inaudible prayer. As the white light of the moon fell only on the outline of her figure, making her pale face paler, and glittering on the drapery of her shawl, she appeared more like a statue of the purest alabaster than a human creature.

Leslie was struck with her unearthly appearance, and paused as he came near her. She was, however, sensible of his approach, and receding from him, forbade him again to touch her, ex-

claiming, "Oh! why, why did I consent to come? I deserve it all—all that can come upon me for this guilty imprudence; and I pray Heaven to enable me to endure my punishment with fortitude."

"Nay, nay," replied Leslie; "all is safe—all are in ignorance."

"Except my own heart and conscience," said Agnes, solemnly; "they are not ignorant; and Heaven grant me patience to endure the agony of the one and the bitter reproaches of the other!" and she moved away.

"But hear me—hear me;" and Leslie would have advanced towards her.

"Nay, Sir Robert Leslie, follow me not; I insist, I command that you approach not one step nearer, and that you permit my passage to the house I ought never to have quitted:" and Agnes spoke with a firmness that she had not hitherto exhibited during the interview. "I have not the power to forbid you my husband's house, because it would betray your secret, but, Sir Robert, if that manly generosity for which I have hitherto given you credit, really exists in your heart, you will never increase the bitterness of my repentance by the continuance of your presence."

The tone of voice, and the whole manner of Agnes, was now so collected and so firm, that Leslie saw all hope of again rousing a feeling in his favor was at an end, and his heart bitterly cursed Trevor. All he could now do was to secure his forgiveness.

"Any thing, every thing you require shall be done," said he, "only let me so manage it that I may run no risk of compromising your honor."

"Nay, Sir, never mind me, my honor can defend itself," said Agnes.

"God forbid that I should doubt it," replied he.

"Permit my free passage, Sir Robert Leslie," again demanded Agnes, for he stood directly across the path which led to the house.

"Let me but convince you that the results of this interview were not premeditated—that if I have erred, it has been only through the uncontrollable impulse of the moment, and not in the premeditated intention.—Breathe but my forgiveness before you go, that my heart may not be left to the agony of bearing your displeasure, and I will be any thing and every thing you wish to make me." As Leslie said this he made way for her to pass. Agnes was nearly exhausted by the energy with which she had uttered the few last sentences.

"Sir Robert Leslie," said she, "I do forgive you—would to God I could forgive myself."

This was uttered in a voice so tremulous that it again encouraged his hopes; he advanced towards her, but she was already gone; and he only caught a glimpse of her white drapery, as with her little remaining strength she threaded the dark labyrinth of the trees in her flight towards the house.

Leslie knew that it was in vain to follow her, and he rushed down to the sea, there venting his hot and ungratified passion in curses both loud and deep against Trevor, himself, Agnes, and the whole world.

* * * * * * * *

CHAPTER XXXV.

Agnes stopped not till she arrived in her dressing-room. She entered, as she had quitted it, through the French casement of her *boudoir*, which opened on to the terrace, and, fortunately, unperceived. The moment she found herself in safety, she hastily turned the key in the lock of the door, and throwing off her shawl, sunk on her knees by the side of the sofa in an agony of tears. For several minutes she was overcome almost to fainting, but in some degree relieved of the full measure of her feeling by her tears; she buried her face in the cushions, as though she was ashamed that it would see the light.

For some time she continued to sob in an agony of grief. Her heart seemed ready to break with its palpitation. She lifted up her streaming eyes to heaven, and attempted to pray. But the attempt died away in undistinguishable sounds. She felt that she had participated in Leslie's sin—that her own heart was not entirely innocent—that her own feelings had not been entirely untouched—the fire of unholy love had been kindled in her veins, and however it might be concealed from others, to her own heart she could not but acknowledge the secret guilt. True, she had triumphed over the momentary feeling—but it had been there, and it had left its traces. It was not extinguished—and it might rise again. Even now her soul was in tumults, and she could not—she dared not pray; she could not—she dared not think;—all she could do was to weep—and sigh—and accuse herself of her involuntary crime. It was in vain her husband's glaring neglect and open infidelities arose in her mind; she considered them as no apology. Nothing could allay the pangs of bitter repentance that shot through her heart as she recollected the feelings by which she had been agitated during the last hour. She was compelled with agony to acknowledge, that, unknown to herself, she had been harboring a guilty passion under the semblance of friendship. She could not deny to herself that she loved Leslie: the truth burst upon her with all the horror connected with such a feeling in a virtuous mind, and she again gave herself up to the agony which this thought created.

Suddenly she was disturbed by a knocking at the door of her *boudoir*, and with breathless anxiety she heard her husband's voice demanding admittance. Surprised at so unusual a circumstance, and conscience stricken, she remained a few seconds motionless—uncertain how to act. Terror dried her tears. Could he have known her? Was he come to reproach her? were questions naturally suggested to her mind. How to act! what to say or do! she had no time for reflection. A second summons louder than the first, forced her from her dressing-room to the door, and she almost determined on her knees to confess all, and to entreat forgiveness; so entirely at this moment had she forgotten all her husband's wrongs towards her, so completely occupied was she with her ideas of her own guilty feelings, and with her repentance

The sight of Trevor, still under the influence of wine, and laughing, soon set her mind at rest with regard to any discovery he might have made.

"Why, Agnes, you are quite barricadoed," said he, "and as difficult of access as an eastern queen."

"I am ill—out of spirits—unfit for society—and—I thought a few hours' quiet might restore me," stammered Agnes, again betrayed into a half falsehood.

"You are right, my love," replied Trevor, "they do make a confounded noise with their music below; those eternal Miss Digginses are come, and have done nothing but play duets with each other, loud enough to stun anybody; and that sentimental Miss Tinkler, with her Italian master *Da Capo* and their guitars, really wear one's nerves threadbare. I wish to God their fathers, and uncles, and cousins, had been freeholders in any other county than this."

Agnes silently assented; greatly relieved from her fears, but still utterly at a loss to know the meaning of such an unusual visit, and still afraid to inquire.

Trevor at length, seeming to recollect something which his description of the people in the drawing-room had for a moment put out of his head, burst out into a violent fit of laughter.

"Oh, Agnes! such a discovery!" said he, "such a discovery about our friend Leslie!"

Agnes trembled, turned paler than before, and could scarcely prevent herself from falling; the influence of the wine was, however, still too potent to permit Trevor to observe her agitation.

"A discovery!" she faintly articulated.

"Yes—a discovery! I know you always supposed Leslie attached to somebody; and that you were curious to know the object," said Trevor, "and I have found it out."

Agnes felt nearly ready to faint. Had he really discovered her? She knew that she could resolve this question in a moment by a single glance, but her consciousness took from her the power to look in his face.

"Ha! ha! ha! Poor Leslie! He certainly is in for it—as we say on the turf; madly—desperately in love—ha! ha! ha! It is really quite delightful to see the knowing ones sometimes taken in themselves. I have heard him swear a hundred times that none of your sex could make him feel. But by his behaviour to-night, I apprehend he has found the contrary—ha! ha! ha!"

Agnes was by this time at ease with regard to his knowledge of her; but the subject filled her with terror and disgust, and she roused her energies to try to persuade Trevor again to leave her to herself.

"But, Mr. Trevor—Charles—what is this to me?" asked Agnes.

"Oh! I have often observed your curiosity on the subject," said Trevor, "and I now come to give you the opportunity of gratifying it. I owe you something, my love, for the present of your portrait." Agnes shuddered, and again felt faint.

"Well—well, but not now, some other time—my head—" she had almost said her heart—"aches, and I am unfit for any thing but my pillow. Pray—pray, leave me; and you, too, Mr. Trevor, I am sure you would be the better for a little repose."

"Why, to be sure," said he, "these confounded freeholders do make one drink; and my head certainly does not, to my own feelings, appear quite stationary: so answer me only one question, and I will leave you—Who is there among our guests that has a white Cashmere shawl, worked with a silver border?

The question was so sudden, so unexpected, that Agnes quite started; and merely repeating his words—"a white Cashmere, with a silver border?" could say no more. Her eye almost unconsciously wandered round the room with a glance of terror, lest the tell-tale garment might be visible; but the equivocation which would have rendered her knowledge doubtful, or the falsehood that would have denied it, died on her lips.

"Yes," repeated Trevor, "a white shawl; a Cashmere, I should think, with a deep silver border; I should know it anywhere."

Agnes recollected with terror the conspicuous appearance of the shawl, and inwardly condemned it to destruction. At this moment, what was her horror at seeing Flounce enter from the dressing room, with which one of the servants' stair-caises communicated by another door, carrying the Cashmere in her hand, which she was in the act of bringing to her mistress, to exculpate herself from the blame of some dirt and stains with which it was sullied, and to wonder how they could come there; but struck with the unusual circumstance of her master being in the lady's *boudoir*, she was hastily retreating, when Trevor catching a glimpse of the shawl, rushed across the room, and stopped her, exclaimed, "By my soul, the identical shawl! Flounce—Agnes—whose shawl is this?" demanded he, in a half passionate tone—the idea which passed through his mind having sobered him in a moment—"answer me instantly; for I am certain it is the very same I was inquiring for, and that I saw this evening worn by a person who was with Leslie."

Worlds could not have drawn a syllable either of truth or equivocation—of confession or extenuation—from the lips of the almost insensible Agnes. But Flounce, though only let enough into Leslie's secret by La Tour to make her suspect much more than actually existed, with the true tact of a waiting-maid, saw how matters stood in an instant; and without the slightest hesitation, fell upon her knees to her mistress, and entreated her forgiveness.

Agnes knew not her meaning; yet she mechanically asked, "For what? What have you done?"

"Oh, ma'am!" replied Flounce, pretending to weep, "I am sure I meant no harm, and intended to take the utmost care; but I thought the new shawl so very beau—beautiful, that I took it down to the steward's room to show the other ladies'-maids; and—and—"

"Well; can't the girl speak without all this fuss?" exclaimed Trevor, "and can't you stand upright?"

"Oh dear, yes—I will, sir," answered Flounce, "but you put me out." She arose; the little interruption, however, instead of "putting her out," had given her time to invent something that might perchance help her mistress out of the dilemma in which she imagined her to be placed.

"And so, ma'am," continued she, "a walk being proposed, because it was so beautifully moonlight, silly I must needs put on the beautifully new Cashmere. Oh! I know it was very wrong, sir."

"Go on," said Trevor.

"So, in the great grove, sir, missing my companions, sir," pursued she, "and wandering about to find my way, who should pop upon me, but—but—Sir Robert Leslie, who I believe took me for somebody else; for—lady—somebody—" she added this, lest the other very indefinite description might be misconstructed as applying to her mistress; "and in escaping from him, the shawl got dirtied, and I am afraid—afraid spoiled." In this she stumbled on the truth.

This to Agnes, who knew the whole to be such a complete fabrication, seemed to be so improbable a tale, that she could not for a moment imagine that it would be believed by Trevor; indeed, she scarcely wished that it should; and during the time Flounce had been telling it, she had been summoning up the whole remaining strength of her mind to meet the consequences of the discovery.

The sudden and impromptu manner, however, in which the tale had been invented and told by Flounce; the circumstance of her having entered the *boudoir* with the shawl hanging on her arm, and evidently looking at the stairs with something like fright and annoyance, conspired, with the utter improbability of its being Agnes herself that he had seen, to convince Trevor of its truth.

"Then it was you after all, that—was with Sir Robert Leslie?" said he.

"Yes, sir," said Flounce.

"And did you see nobody else?"

"There were one or two others, sir," replied Flounce, "but I was afraid to look up; I believe they were tipsey, sir." This reply silenced his questions on this point; he continued his catechism, by asking who was her first companion.

Here Flounce hesitated; she knew that her falsehood might be betrayed, if she mentioned any of the female attendants; not one of whom could she trust with this deception of her master without, in some measure, implicating her mistress.

Trevor repeated this question—Flounce hung down her head, attempted, or pretended to blush, and stammered out in a hesitating voice, "Mr. La Tour, sir."

"La Tour! hum—like master like man." This he half muttered to himself; then feeling that the effects of his wine must have been perceptible in his conduct, he apologised to Agnes; conjured her not to mind the people below, but retire to bed; and finishing, by saying, that "it would be a good laugh against Leslie;" and casting a sly look at Flounce, he withdrew.

The moment he was gone, Agnes, without noticing Flounce, who was waiting all expectation for a signal of approbation, rushed into the dressing-room, and locking the door upon Flounce, who had attempted to follow her, threw herself upon the bed in a state of mind more easily to be conceived than described.

Mrs. Flounce, proud of her own exploits, tossed up her head at being shut out, and exclaiming, "Humph! this comes now of not trusting me," went in search of La Tour, to tell him of what had happened, that he might put his master on his guard, as to what he should say to Trevor; and also with a womanish curiosity, to sift out from him the circumstances that had led to the necessity of her interference.

Flounce really loved her mistress; and twelve months previous to this period, would as soon have thought of self destruction as of entering into any plot which would have the least chance of compromising Ler. The unbounded influence, however, which La Tour soon acquired over her, united with her indignation at the unworthy treatment which Agnes received at the hands of Trevor, of the whole of whose intrigues and infidelities Flounce had been apprised by La Tour; together with that gradual demoralization of mind and heart which inevitably succeeds a wilful and unrepented lapse from chastity in a woman, had gradually undermined all her early, though never deeply implanted, principles of virtue. Knowing Leslie's violent passion for her mistress, she thought a return on her part would be a just revenge on Trevor for his conduct.

La Tour had not studied in Leslie's school for nothing. Like him, he was a complete master of his art; and his seduction of Flounce, both mind and person, had been complete. Devotedly attached to him, and dreading nothing so much as a separation, it was little to be wondered at, that a weak mind should lend itself to any plan that might tend to promote her own wishes, and perhaps conduce to restore the happiness of her mistress. La Tour had given the history of the lives of many couples on the continent, who lived in those unprejudiced countries, surrounded by every luxury, in the very first circles of society, although united by no stronger bonds than those of love. Of one or two of these parties Flounce had had a steward's room knowledge when they were in England, before the circumstances occurred that had rendered their living abroad necessary; and consequently the account of their pleasures and happiness, and "*position bien respectable dans la societé*," made a great impression on her mind.

She was not, however, brought to that state which would have wished or promoted the elopement of Agnes from her husband, however indignant she felt at his treatment of her. But, as La Tour said to his master, while he regaled himself with a pinch of snuff, and indulged in one of those usual shrugs of his shoulders, which acted like a note of admiration to his sentence, *ça viendra avec le temps*.

Agnes passed her night in tears of repentance, and in vain attempts at prayer. She saw the abysm into which one lapse from sincerity and truth had plunged her, and saw no means of receding. Her only hope was that Leslie, knowing her wishes, would accelerate his departure from the hall, which, since her discovery of the strength of her feelings towards him, became more necessary to her than ever.

The next morning brought Flounce to her room. It was impossible to pass over the scene of the previous evening without some observation; yet any explanation with a servant was so humiliating, that she knew not how to enter upon it. Any thing else than the truth never passed the lips of Agnes even to a servant; and during all the late

circumstances connected with her portrait, or with her interview with Leslie, had she spoken at all, the truth would have been told, whatever might have been the consequences; but, unfortunately for her, she had allowed herself a tacit concurrence in the falsehood, and trusted that the evils she hoped to avert by it was a sufficient apology.

Agnes now carefully avoided being alone with Leslie: her morning rides were always in society, and her evening strolls were solitary. She contrived on all occasions to be so surrounded in the drawing-room, that there was no opportunity for the slightest confidential communication, had Leslie appeared to seek it. This however he did not, but rather seemed on all occasions to respect the wishes of Agnes, though evidently with such a degree of self-denial and of pain, that gained him additional credit for his delicacy and his forbearance.

Day passed after day, and days increased to weeks, without the appearance of the expected guests. Agnes was extremely anxious and uneasy. At length, however, feeling that her danger was daily and hourly increasing while in the perpetual society of Leslie, she suddenly determined, at all events, to break up the party and return to town; where at any rate she should not be under the same roof with him. This determination was no sooner made than executed. Trevor complied, because Lady Flora had gone to London to meet her sick husband, and the guests were dismissed with that ease and freedom which modern good society allows, and Trevor Hall was again left to its uninterrupted solitude.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

* * * * As Leslie had said, the dice were not *always* against Trevor, and thus his ruin, by fair means, seemed too long a process. He contrived therefore to introduce him to a set of desperadoes, in whose society the play was deeper, and the excitement consequently stronger. These were a set of men of ruined fortunes, who had once been gentlemen—who still pretended to be the same—and who bullied themselves into a certain grade of society, where, though their character was doubtful, they were tolerated, because there were none who thought it worth while to put themselves upon a par with them to dispute it, or to risk the disgrace of being shot by them.

Leslie's love was now become madness. It was the master-passion of his soul. He had restrained it till he had nearly lost all power over his actions. His observation of Agnes had led him to believe that nothing but opportunity was wanting to the fruition of his wishes; he believed this to be as necessary to her happiness as his own. He knew that this opportunity would never be afforded by her, and he determined *coûte qui coûte* to make it for himself, and to succeed or perish in the attempt.

By this time Flounce was ready to aid him in any plan that could be devised.

Leslie's prolific brain was not long in determining on what that plan should be; all he wanted was a private interview with Agnes, without fear of interruption; and the rest he left to the influence of her passions, and to his own address. But he never permitted Flounce to know how desperate and how determined was his resolution to succeed.

As Agnes generally returned from her parties early, it was agreed that Flounce should conceal Leslie in her dressing-room; and though Trevor seldom passed a night at home, it was determined that Leslie should not leave him till he was so deeply engaged in Burgundy and hazard, as to preclude the probability of his return; while a hint to some of his companions, he well knew, might prevent it altogether for the night.

The whole of Trevor's establishment, with the exception of his own valet, and his wife's maid, were domesticated at such a distance from the apartments occupied by themselves, that there was little fear of interruption from them; but to make this still surer, a night was chosen on which all the male part of the establishment had been permitted by the kindness of their mistress to attend a party which La Tour was to give in the steward's-room at his master's house in Audley Square.

These arrangements once made, Leslie's pain was in some degree allayed, and he forced himself to wait the appointed evening with some degree of patience.

LESLIE TO VILLARS.

Fred, where do you think I write this? Where do you suppose my trembling hand traces these sentiments of a still more trembling heart? But you will never guess. Be silent as a grave; secret as oblivion, Fred, and I'll tell you—in her dressing-room—in the dressing-room of Agnes. Do not start, and never breathe a word of it even to the winds; no not though you went up in a balloon to do it. Yes, Fred, in her own room, and with her own writing materials do I now address you. Let that account for the effeminacy of my paper; for the agitation of my scrawl; and for the incoherency of my letter.

What brought me here, say you? Gold, omnipotent gold, and woman's treachery! And yet, Fred, can that be called treachery which would procure the happiness of those it betrays? surely not! And that this maid of hers believes this to be the case, by making *her* mistress mine, I have not the slightest doubt.

Yes, Fred, a woman has brought me here; La Tour gives a *fête* at my house, so that the principal servants are out of the way; the rest never approach this part of the house. Trevor I have deeply engaged in play with four desperadoes, who have often been of use to me, Fred, in matters of this sort: before I quitted him, I saw enough Burgundy into his brain, and placed enough gold at his command, to insure his remaining there till morning, playing and drinking deeply; and my plans are so well laid, that should any thing happen to make him leave his party sooner, I shall receive instant intelligence by a signal from without. A carriage and four stands at the corner of Stanhope Street; and relays of my own horses, with confidential

drivers are at every stage between this and Dover; ready, if she accompanies me, which I hope, or in case I am obliged to use them by myself. You will guess why; I may be put to this alternative.

Such, Fred, are my arrangements. I tell them to you now, for the increasing fever in my veins will scarcely leave me the power to do so presently. Are they not made with a master-hand? And here I am, determined, whatever the consequences may be, to take advantage of them: my impatience has driven me here a full hour before my time; and if I did not take these means of allaying it, I really think I should expire before the arrival of Agnes.

Ha! the time is come. I think—yes, I *do* hear footsteps.—Be still, my heart. Breath, do not quite desert me. It *is*——Good bye Fred.

Leslie's senses had not deceived him. It was Agnes; and Leslie had just time to arrange his concealment behind the curtain before she entered the room, accompanied by Flounce, whose furtive glance and evident consciousness would have created suspicion in the mind of any one less absorbed than Agnes appeared to be.

Agnes dismissed her maid almost instantly, and, throwing herself on the couch, seemed to resign herself to reflection.

The couch was so placed that Leslie could not see her face. At first, every thing was silent; she seemed settling herself to repose; but one gentle sigh, succeeded by another, and that followed by tears, soon convinced him to the contrary. A series of broken sobs now issued from her bosom, and she was evidently giving way to some long controlled feeling that had at length overpowered her. In the midst of this, he heard his own name mingled with that of Trevor; and his heart leaped into his throat as he resisted the impulse this gave him to rush forward and throw himself at her feet.

Her agitation a little calmed, she slowly divested herself of her ornaments, but with the air of one who scarcely knew what she did. Then suddenly clasping her hands, and lifting them to heaven, she exclaimed, "Oh, what a guilty creature I am!" and again threw herself on the sofa in an agony of grief.

As this subsided, her eyes happened to glance upon the mirror—they became rivetted; her tears seemed to be suddenly dried up by a burning which suffused her cheek. She saw the curtain move—she gasped for breath—she started from the sofa, and beheld Leslie at her feet.

Unable longer to control himself, and rendered impatient beyond endurance by the delay of Agnes in undressing, he had left his concealment before he had at first intended, relying on the evidence he had thus orally had of her feelings with regard to him, and threw himself speechless and almost breathless on his knees before her.

Agnes was at first paralyzed at the unexpected sight, and seemed to gaze upon him as upon some unreal thing, distrusting the evidence of her senses. She would have screamed, but her tongue clove to the roof of her mouth; she attempted to move, but her limbs refused their office. A nightmare feeling crept over her, and she seemed fascinated into immobility.

Leslie himself was so overpowered with the long controlled passion which was now bursting forth, that he could not speak; heavy and audible breathings, and eyes that looked as though they would burst from their sockets, were the only evidences of his existence. At length, in broken accents, he uttered the name of "Agnes!" and seized her hand. His voice and touch in a moment restored her to herself. She rushed towards the door, but Leslie intercepted her in her passage; she turned to ring the bell, and, found, to her agony, that the pull had been conveyed out of her reach.

She stood for a moment in mute despair. Leslie approached her, but she motioned him away. At length, she seemed to assume sufficient courage to speak; and in hurried accents and unconnected sentences, she exclaimed—

"How dare you—thus—add—insult to—to—" and then forgetting herself, "how come you here, sir?"

At this moment, the wind agitated the window curtain, and Leslie's eyes being attracted in that direction, she exclaimed, "Ha! the window!" and rushed towards it with a precipitance and force that would have dashed through it into the garden, though it was two stories from the ground, had not Leslie fortunately caught her just in time to prevent such a catastrophe.

The imminent risk she had run in this attempt at escape, made Leslie cool; and as he brought her, resisting with all her strength, from the window, he exclaimed—

"Agnes! Agnes! why this agitation? Would you prefer death—"

"Death—destruction—any thing," interrupted she, "to this unlooked-for insult."

"Nay, hear me; you must hear me. It is impossible for me to live, deprived as I am of your society. Calm this agitation; you are safe—you are indeed, with me—with one who loves as I do," said Leslie; "only hear me—"

"To-morrow! to-morrow!" and Agnes almost screamed these words, "Leave me now, and I will bless you—pray for you!"

"I will—I will," said Leslie, almost inarticulately, "presently; only hear me—listen to me. We both love—nay, it is useless to deny it—we both love to madness—with a passion preying upon our hearts, and hurrying both of us into our graves."

"Oh, would to God I were in mine!" wept Agnes; and Leslie rejoiced in her tears.

"Nay, but why should we sacrifice the best feelings of our existence to paltry prejudices, which ought not to fetter such souls as ours—"

"Sir Robert Leslie insult me not; I will not hear you:" and Agnes turned away.

"Can the sacrifice of a neglectful, unworthy husband, be put in competition with such a love as mine? Can the opinions of the contemptible and prejudiced few, weigh against those passions upon which heaven and nature have set their seals, by the enjoyments they have annexed to their indulgence?"

"Sir Robert Leslie leave me—I entreat—I command—I implore—" and she screamed as

loudly as her strength would permit for assistance.

"Nay—nay—Agnes, the few servants who remain in the house are out of hearing. Trevor, your natural protector and guardian, is away—all I ask is a patient hearing—and you shall be safe," said Leslie, amd he approached nearer to her.

Agnes was sensible of the truth of what he said, and weeping, receded from him.

"Agnes, I love you—love you with a love as devoted as it is ardent. I have loved you from the first moment I saw you, and stifled my passion in my own breast, lest its expression should give offence to the object of my heart's warmest feelings—accident alone discovered it. Your determination to banish me from your presence has only added strength to my passion; while I saw you and conversed with you daily, it was some alleviation to my feelings—but deprived of your society, they have become too strong for me to control—and I am here—to throw myself—my heart—my life—my very soul, upon your mercy! Agnes, I am desperate—but you may govern me. Agnes, I am mad—but you may control me. I love you—with a love surpassing the power of expression—;" and his voice was scarcely audible in the passionate whisper to which it appeared to be reduced by excess of feeling.

Agnes could not reply. Her tears flowed faster—her bosom heaved convulsively—she seemed sinking on the floor. Leslie saw and felt his advantage, and caught her in his arms. This action roused her in a moment; she attempted to start away, but he only held her closer to his breast. It was in vain she struggled. Leslie felt her warm breath mingle with his own. His lips were upon her cheek. Her sob became a suppressed shriek—her struggle almost the ineffectual effort of an infant: but as he attempted to lift her from the floor, she suddenly reassumed a portion of her energy, and slipping through his arms, sunk on her knees before him.

"Sir—Leslie," said she, in a voice which, though only a whisper, was so articulate, that every word would have made its way to the heart of any one but such a man as Leslie. "As a man of honor—for the love of heaven—by every thing that is sacred—I conjure you to leave me—as you may one day have a daughter—or a wife of your own——"

"Never, never, Agnes," interrupted he, "you have so engrossed every feeling of my heart, that it can never beat for another. I have controlled my passions beyond the powers of human nature—I can resist them no longer;" and he again attempted to take her in his arms.

She struggled violently; to scream she found impossible—when suddenly one violent knock was heard, that made Leslie start, and enabled Agnes to free herself for a moment from his arms. The knock was again repeated. It was evidently at the street door; and for the sound to have reached to that remote apartment, must have been struck with prodigious violence.

The sound seemed to reach to the very heart of Agnes; and Leslie himself appeared to tremble at its repetition, without being able to account for its effect upon him. He stood as Juan did when he heard the knock that announced the arrival of the Commendatore's ghost. The silence, however, which succeeded, gave him time to think; and he had almost concluded it to be the result of some frolic, when hurried footsteps were heard to approach the dressing room door, and Flounce rushed in, pale as death, and, falling upon her knees before Agnes, exclaimed—"Oh! my master!—my master!"

"Thank heaven! thank heaven!—then I am safe!" exclaimed Agnes, and sunk fainting on a chair.

Leslie started, and cried out, "Where, where? by which passage is he coming?"

But the sobs and screams of Flounce were increased into hysterics, and nothing that she attempted to say could be comprehended.

Leslie, apprehensive every moment that Trevor would follow her into the room, unwilling to relinquish his prey, hastily formed a resolution to carry off Agnes by the staircase that led to the garden. For this purpose he unlocked the door leading into the room before mentioned as communicating with Trevor's apartments and with this private staircase. He was quite fearless of any resistance on the part of Flounce, and knowing his agents all on the alert, he was in hopes, while her senses were still so nearly overpowered, that he might succeed in his desperate attempt.

He seized the fainting, and now unresisting Agnes in his arms, and bore her to this apartment. As he entered, however, and approached the door that led to the staircase, he was struck by the sound of a number of confused footsteps evidently hurrying towards it on the other side.

Agnes heard them likewise; and the hope of escape gave her a momentary power to free herself from the hold of Leslie. She rushed towards the door; but before she could reach it, or Leslie either prevent her, or retreat, it was thrown suddenly open, and Trevor's own man entered with lights, followed by five or six common looking men, who were bearing the breathless and still bleeding corpse of his master stretched upon a shutter on their shoulders. The cravat had been taken off, and the open shirt showed the wound in the breast by which his death had been occasioned, and which became exposed as they placed the body upon a table.

Agnes started with horror—gazed once upon the pale countenance, from which death had not yet wiped the stamp of those fierce passions by which it had so lately been agitated—gave one piercing shriek, and was borne by the surrounding people back to her own apartments.

Leslie saw that Trevor was really dead—comprehended in a moment all that had happened, and quitting the house unobserved in the confusion, rushed with the feelings of a disappointed madman—first to the place at which he had left Trevor, where he heard the true history of the fatal catastrophe, and then to his own home.

LESLIE TO VILLARS.—(In continuation.)

FRED, fate has determined that Trevor should never be a cuckold. The destinies themselves have enlisted in the preservation of his honor as a husband; and rather than he should live to be branded with that ignominious epithet, they have actually

killed him. Killed him, say you?—Yes, Villars, Trevor is *dead!* Don't start; but he is actually dead. Unfortunately for himself, he saw through the arts of those with whom he was playing—accused them of false play—swore the dice were loaded and the cards packed—became very intemperate—struck one of his companions, who happened to be an Irishman and a fire-eater. Nothing would do but immediate satisfaction. Pistols were unhappily at hand; they went out on the instant by moonlight, and the first fire Trevor was shot through the heart. This comes of employing fellows who go beyond their instructions, which is quite as bad as not acting up to them. The officious scoundrel who shot him, and who has been concerned in more secrets of yours and mine than I care for, is on his way to Dover, with the horses I had provided for a different purpose. Farewell.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

"MARRIAGES IN HIGH LIFE.—Yesterday morning, at St. James's Church, Sir Robert Leslie, Bart., was united to the accomplished widow of the late Honorable Charles Trevor; and at the same time, Francis Hartley, Esquire, M. P., led the beautiful Lady Emily Trevor to the altar. Carriages-and-four were in waiting at the church doors, to convey both the happy couples to Leslie Hall, where they intended to pass the autumn, and where they will be joined by a large party of fashionables to partake in the festivities of Christmas."

The reader must be apprised that many months had elapsed since the awful death of Trevor before the marriages recorded in the foregoing paragraph took place.

That event had completely foiled Leslie, and overturned every project he had formed. Agnes, free and unfettered, and open to his legitimate pursuit, was, as he had foreseen, a very different person from the Agnes united by a wayward destiny to a man every way unfit for her, and pursued by one who loved her with a passion that appeared as ardent as he asserted it was involuntary and unconquerable. The expression of that feeling, and of the wishes it had created, might find apology for the madness of passion when there were no legitimate means of gratifying it; but the obstacle once removed—a legitimate path being opened, Leslie knew that there was no hope for him through any other. The very attempt would give the lie to all he had said—to all he had sworn—to all he had urged; and he cursed the violence of his agent, which had led to a catastrophe so far beyond his intentions with regard to Trevor, and which had placed him in such a predicament.

But Leslie had been too much addicted to the indulgence of every whim and passion that had ever entered his mind, to be able to give up even one ungratified. He had never fixed his inclinations on a woman, and uttered his imperious "I WILL," that he had not accomplished his wishes; and feeling for Agnes a sentiment a thousand times more powerful than he had ever experienced before, he found, or believed, it impossible to resign his hopes of making her his. It was in vain he argued upon the dangers of marriage, or upon the absurdity of any other expectation. It was in vain he strove, in the society of other women, to forget her. His inclinations had taken so strong a hold upon his heart, that his passion had become disease; and he felt that were he to fly as far as the Antipodes, the idea of leaving such a powerful passion ungratified, and Agnes open to the honorable pursuits of others, would have brought him back again.

During this period, too, he received letter after letter from Villars, dissuading him from venturing on such a step under his present circumstances: and another letter had also arrived, and been intercepted, in the same hand-writing as the preceding ones, still warning Agnes strongly against him, and still accounting for the writer's absence, by his pursuit of some object of Leslie's seduction and desertion. Leslie knew well the circumstance to which the letter alluded, and cursed the officiousness of the writer; while he vowed to be deeply revenged upon this anonymous accuser, should it ever be his fortune to discover him.

Nothing, however, could wean him from his determination to succeed. His passions had been too long uncontrolled to be governed by his reason, and he went on.

Another incentive to his passion, and which perhaps operated nearly, if not quite, as strongly as his own violent inclinations, was the refusal of Agnes to see him. The horrors of the scene in Trevor's room, and of his sudden and unexpected death, had scarcely subsided, when reflection brought to her mind the audacious attempt of Leslie; and she shuddered almost as much at what might have been the event, as she did at that to which perhaps her safety was in a great measure attributable. Her grief, or rather perhaps her horror, therefore, at Trevor's fate, was succeeded by an indignation against Leslie, which it required all his address to allay. It was still however several weeks before his persevering attempts to see her were crowned with success: when he did at length obtain an interview, knowing that she really loved him, he took advantage of this knowledge, and pleaded his cause and his apology so successfully, that he at last wrought on her to believe that every thing had arisen from the excess of his passion; and found an excuse for his conduct in the madness which was the consequence of his love, of her unhappiness, and of the hopeless circumstances of their situation.

It will be easy enough for those who do not love, to blame Agnes for ever again seeing or listening to Leslie; but let those who blame her, themselves love the object who has offended them, and they will find it quite as easy, as Agnes did, to pardon and forget the offence, when the heart pleads for the offender; and when the offence is supposed to have arisen from that which every woman views with an eye of favor—excess of love. Agnes was not, like the reader, aware of the real character of

Leslie. It should be recollected, that to her he appeared only a romantic and impassioned being, suffering a martyrdom under feelings she herself had inspired, and giving way to them at length only through the uncontrollable strength of a passion which had overcome his reason. All this was no apology for the insult offered to her honor; and she was herself too much involved in her own feelings for Leslie to recollect, that the woman who has once heard sentiments of a dishonorable nature from the lips of a man, should be very guarded in believing those of an opposite tendency, when it is so much the interest of his passion to express them.

The circumstances attending the death of Trevor had made much greater impression, and occasioned much more grief in the mind of Agnes, than his death itself. She was above the affectation of a sentiment she could not feel; and the terms on which she had lived with Trevor being well known to the world, there existed no occasion for the display of much sorrow on the occasion.

Many of her acquaintance, who knew Trevor intimately, indeed considered his death as a matter of congratulation; and would have treated it so, even with Agnes herself, had the propriety of her own feelings permitted it.

Though Trevor had never respected himself, Agnes was determined that as few people as possible should have to cast a reflection upon his memory. All his own estate, as he died without children, passed to another branch of his family; so that there was nothing to satisfy his numerous creditors but his wife's fortune, which having been all settled upon herself, was not liable to any of his debts. To rescue the memory of Trevor from as much odium as possible, she discharged every claim that could be made against him, not excepting those contracted in the indulgence of that vice which had led to his death; among these were the sums due to Leslie, the amount of which she contrived to ascertain and to pay in spite of all he could do to prevent it; and it was during the negotiation of this affair that he managed by stratagem to gain his first interview after the death of Trevor.

Her forgiveness once obtained, all other steps were easy enough; and in time they led to the result narrated in the paragraph. This marriage, however, did not take place without many struggles on the part of Leslie to resist the influence of a feeling which was leading him into a path from which he knew there was no retreating. But this passion was so predominant over every other feeling, that it conquered in spite of all his resistance, and in spite of his better judgment. The moment the irrevocable step was taken, he despatched a courier to Villars, urging him to employ every system of espionage to discover the retreat of those who had now so long and so successfully eluded his vigilance, and who did not appear to have been yet discovered by the writer of the anonymous warnings.

During the last year Leslie had so conducted himself to the eyes of Hartley and Lady Emily, as to give them such security of his reform, that knowing the love Agnes bore to him, they did all in their power to promote their union. On the part of Agnes herself, disbelieving all the reports she had heard to his disadvantage, struck by the brilliancy of his talents, the elegance of his manners, and by the apparent devotedness of his love, it was no wonder that she gave herself up to the indulgence of a feeling which was now in her eyes perfectly innocent.

Sir Robert Leslie, as a man quite *comme il faut*, a baronet with a large estate, with a peerage in reversion, was precisely the person Lady Pomeroy would like to call nephew, and that Mrs. Henry Pomeroy would be happy to distinguish by the title of brother: so no wonder that the match met with their sanction.

Lady Emily's hand had been joined with that of Hartley by her mother on her death-bed; and her esteem and friendship were so excited by his unwearied attentions, that they were ripened into that feeling which enabled her conscientiously to bestow it upon him at the altar. After their marriage, Leslie himself was so surprised at the superior degree of delight that he enjoyed in the society of a woman who considered herself legitimately his, and who could give herself up to all those sentiments which he had never excited in another, unalloyed by those feelings of guilt which operated against their enjoyment in the objects of his passion, and lowered them in his esteem, that, for the first time in his life, he felt that he could have been happy, but from circumstances which would still intrude upon his memory to mar his felicity. Still there was sufficient in the full accomplishment of wishes so long indulged, to satisfy even such a mind as his; and to his surprise, the possession of Agnes had as yet only added to his passion.

Agnes herself was perfectly happy; married to the man she loved; believing herself loved devotedly in return. Ignorant of every thing but what she felt and saw, existence again teemed with every pleasure for her, and she looked upon Leslie as the person to whom this happy change was attributable.

If a cloud would ever come over the sunshine of her happiness, it was when she sometimes observed Leslie to be restless and uneasy, and which was invariably the case whenever he had any letters from the continent. At these periods he would appear anxious and agitated at every knock at the door, and at the announcement of any name to which he was unaccustomed.

But as these fits were only of short duration, and the suavity of his manners soon returned, she regretted them without any suspicion being excited that they arose from any thing more than some temporary annoyance.

Thus month after month rolled on happily with Agnes, and with a strange mixture of anxiety and pleasure with Leslie. At the end of the year, her happiness was increased by the birth of a girl, who created a new outlet for all the affectionate feelings of her heart, by exciting a new affection, and by increasing, if possible, that which she felt for Leslie.

He, however, to her surprise, expressed no pleasure at an event so fraught for her with additional happiness; but this being attributed both by herself and friends to his disappointment at the child's not being a boy, which a little time would wear off, was permitted to pass unnoticed.

Leslie's mind and affections were, however, undergoing a rapid change: he had been too much of a selfish sensualist to enjoy any other pleasures

long, than those which were centred in self; and the appearance of Agnes as a mother, and in the performance of a mother's duty, had precisely the contrary effect to that which would have been produced on a well regulated heart and mind.

The pleasures of domestic enjoyment were becoming too tame for him; they were not sufficiently exciting to relieve his mind from some circumstance, the memory and the pain of which, in spite of himself, destroyed his tranquillity. In the society, therefore, of a few of his most select companions, he indulged in his old propensities; but this was done so cautiously, that it was unknown and unsuspected by Agnes.

About this period, the reversionary peerage and estate fell in; and every body was surprised at the eagerness with which he assumed his new title of Lord Arlington, and the tenacity with which he determined, except in his own private coterie, never to permit himself to be addressed by the name of Leslie

Some attributed this to caprice; others to pride. Leslie himself, and La Tour, alone knew the reasons for it.

Leslie was, however, doomed to experience other miseries than those arising from this secret anxiety, as the old tone of his mind returned; with it also returned his old evil opinion of women; and as he still saw that Agnes was all that a man could desire in a woman whom he had not possessed, he began to imagine that she might become the object of other men's dishonorable pursuits, as she had once been of his own.

His recollections of the use he had made of the services of Flounce made him determine to remove her from the person of his wife, lest she might be tempted to betray her to others, as she had once been wrought upon to betray her to himself. Of this circumstance Agnes had been kept in entire ignorance, or she would herself have been the first to remove her from her situation with disgrace.

To manage this removal of Flounce, he tried to persuade La Tour to marry her; but the wily Frenchman, in such a service as that of Leslie, had seen too much of matrimony to venture his own neck within its pale.

At this period Leslie received a letter from Villars, which redoubled all his anxiety. La Tour was dispatched to Calais; confidential agents were sent to Boulogne and Dieppe; and every post brought letters from them, all of which were eagerly opened by Leslie, who had the utmost difficulty to conceal the agitation in which he lived.

Agnes, who had discovered some of the incipient appearances of Leslie's jealousy, attributed every thing to the same source, and immediately did every thing in her power to allay them, by increasing the evidences of her own affection and happiness, and by confining her patronage and praise almost exclusively to female talent; for she had thought once or twice that she had read something like uneasiness in his eye, when she had, with her usual exuberance of feeling, given way to the praise of men of genius, and so ardently sought to add them to the many attractions of her table and drawing room. This very jealousy, however, by convincing her of the unabated ardour of his love, perhaps increased the happiness to which the birth of her child had added in so great a degree. As a wife, therefore, and as a mother, Agnes was completely happy; and she again indulged in all the romance of her disposition, by anticipating the progress and perfection of her infant in maturity, and by indulging in all the fond dreams of a young mother with her first child.

Their marriages had only increased the intimacy of the two friends. Lady Emily had found much more than she expected in Hartley. Every day brought forth some new trait to admire, or the knowledge of some new characteristic to excite esteem. She had never perhaps felt the more ecstatic pleasures of Agnes, but she experienced a more tranquil happiness, and felt that it was grounded upon a more solid basis than the mere gratifications of passion.

Not possessed of the same ample means, and not coveting the power which the fashion of Agnes gave her to patronise merit with effect, but yet having the same inclinations to befriend struggling talent, Lady Emily Hartley, on occasions in which her sympathies had been excited and her aid solicited, had been in the habit of engaging her friend to interest herself in the welfare of any of her *protégés*.

During her residence with Lady Trevor on the Continent, and at that lady's death, she had been under considerable obligations to a noble family at Florence, a sense of which she had expressed an anxiety to show by every return in her power, and this opportunity was afforded her by a letter which she had received, recommending an Italian family to her notice and protection.

This family consisted of an elderly gentleman and a young and beautiful female. They were kindly received by Lady Emily; but although they confessed themselves in straitened circumstances, they refused every other kind of aid than that which might enable the lady to make some use of her talent for music; which from the little that Lady Emily heard, appeared to be extraordinary. As usual, she applied to her friend, who promised every assistance, and proposed to produce her at one of her own concerts, which was the surest way to bring her into fashion, and to secure her professional engagements.

Leslie, however, unable to explain the cause of the fears by which he was now perpetually assailed, and which, in spite of his usual firm nerves, kept him in a continual state of agitation and seeing no remedy for them while the letters of Villars still left the destination of the object unknown, determined at length to gratify the long anxious desire of Agnes to travel. Any thing he felt was better than the state of anxiety in which he lived in his own house, where every knock at the door gave him a palpitation of the heart, and the introduction of every stranger excited an unpleasant suspicion in his mind.

When this determination was announced to Agnes, it was received with delight; first, because she anticipated much gratification to her taste and imagination from the variety of scenery and the novelty of the objects which she was going to see; and secondly, because she attributed it to the wish of Leslie to gratify a long expressed inclination of hers.

To travel had long been the desire of Agnes

to see the places she had heard and read of so much—to visit the Imperial City—to sojourn in the scenes of departed greatness, was delight; but to do this with a companion who engrossed every feeling of her heart; to do this with one so capable of doubling every pleasure by the information he could afford; and to travel thus, accompanied as it were by all the best affections of life, for her beloved child, with her nursery menage, was to be of their party, was indeed happiness to the heart of Agnes.

She likewise promised herself additional pleasure from the contemplation of places in which some portion of the life of Leslie had been passed. Alas! she little knew how passed, or she would not have been anxious to have recalled the circumstances connected with these scenes to his recollection.

From the moment that this tour was determined on, Leslie's mind became easier; he was sensible of the superior power of money on the Continent, should any realization of his fears occur there, and he knew also by experience, that there were a hundred ways of silencing the laws there, while here, with the high as well as the low, with the wealthy as well as the wretched, Justice takes its course. Here, indeed, blindness is her proper illustration.

While the preparations for departure were going forward, and which by their extent seemed to indicate an intention of a long sojourn abroad, Agnes issued cards for a farewell *fête*, which was intended to outvie in splendor all that had hitherto been given in Audley Square, and at which she determined to produce her friend Lady Emily's *protegèe* to the fashionable world, kindly sensible that success at one of her parties would give such a stamp of currency to her talents as would ensure her the patronage of all the *élite* of society, and thus would prevent her being any loser by her own unexpected absence.

On the occasion of all her fomer *fêtes*, Leslie had appeared uneasy; had been anxious to know the number and quality of the guests; had been particular in his inquiries as to the foreigners likely to be present; and objected to the general invitations forwarded to the different ambassadors; but on this occasion he entered with the same spirit as Agnes herself into the preparations, and seemed quite as much determined as she was to do any thing that should make the party go off with *eclat*.

Paragraph after paragraph announced the anticipated splendor of this assembly; those who had unfortunately fixed on the same evening for their own parties postponed them, both from the wish of attending Lady Arlington's, and from the fear of their own rooms being empty.

The evening at length came; the company arrived; the splendid apartments were filled to suffocation with all the rank and talent of the country. Agnes was every where attempting to communicate to her guests the happiness she herself experienced. She moved about the envy of some, the admiration of all, and had never appeared a more charming hostess than on this evening. The entertainments were to commence with a concert, to which the talents of all the principal professors, both foreign and English, were to contribute.

The music was of the highest order. English melody was interspersed with Italian and German concerted pieces. Handel, Mozart, and Beethoven, kept up the character of Germany; Rossini and Paisiello were given as specimens of the Italian masters; while Locke, Purcell, and Bishop, sustained the reputation of English composition.

At length a buzz ran through the room that a new singer, a *protegee* of Lady Emily Hartley's was to be produced, under the patronage of Lady Arlington, and that she was just then going to sing.

Knowing Leslie's love of music, Agnes had reserved this, which she knew would be a treat to him from his knowledge, that the surprise of such an exhibition might add to his pleasure. On looking round, however, at this moment, she perceived that he was absent, and supposing him in an adjoining apartment which communicated with the concert room, behind the orchestra, and which had been reserved as a sort of retiring room for themselves, and to communicate instructions to the servants, she despatched Hartley to summon him to the expected treat.

In the meantime the new singer was led to the front of the orchestra by Lady Emily, who placed herself in a seat near her. She was followed and encouraged by an elderly looking personage, of a very interesting appearance; but though his silver hairs bespoke his age, his features seemed to depict extraordinary energy of character; and as he stood at the back of the chair, his furrowed and stern countenance formed a fine contrast to the pensive and youthful character of that of the new *debutante*. When she first entered, a long veil scarcely permitted a view of her face, and she sat down under considerable agitation; encouraged, however, by the looks of Lady Emily, and by her aged companion, she appeared to assume new courage.

As she stood up to sing, and drew aside her veil, shaking back the long black ringlets which shaded her fine forehead, a universal buzz of admiration at her beauty ran through the assembly. Her countenance was a perfect oval; her complexion presented that rare combination of dark eyes with a face fair almost to whiteness. Her eyes and hair were black and lustrous. Her hair, which hung in natural ringlets over her shoulders, was confined only by the veil which was pinned by a diamond in the centre of her forehead, from which it parted, hanging over her neck in fashion of a Spanish mantilla. The rest of her dress was of the simplest description, and by its very simplicity was calculated to show off the fineness of her form, which was full, without being large. As the expressions of the admiration she excited reached her ear, the color brightened in her cheek, and as it subsided into silence, as one of Mozart's symphonies commenced, her agitation was so conspicuous that many thought she would not be able to accomplish her task. As the symphony died away, however, and the fine rich tones of her voice swelled through the apartment, in the recitative all fears of this kind were dissipated, and many a disappointed professor was obliged reluctantly to confess that the anticipations raised in her favor were about to be more than realized.

The exertion used in the recitative had given her courage and energy, and she began the

air with such power as to electrify her audience.

Agnes, herself delighted, was beginning to be quite vexed at the absence of Leslie, when the door of a private communication opened, and he entered; she beckoned him to a seat near her with her finger held up to hush him into silence and attention: he stole softly to her side, returning the smile of pleasure with which she had greeted him, and turning round to look at the object of universal admiration, who was at this moment indulging in one of those luxuriant cadenzas which the composition permitted, when, to the astonishment of Agnes, he started, turned pale, and uttering a half exclamation of horror, would have quitted the room. At this moment the attention of the singer being directed to the spot, her eyes met those of Leslie, the book dropped from her hand, she uttered one piercing shriek, exclaimed, "*è egli! è il mio marito,*" and sunk back senseless into the arms of her aged companion.

The moment, however, that he comprehended the cause of her illness, and saw Leslie making his way from Agnes and through the company, which were now crowding towards the orchestra to learn the cause of the disturbance, he exclaimed in English, "Alive! I was sure of it." In a moment he resigned his charge to Lady Emily, and leaping with the elasticity of youth in his limbs, and with more than its energy in his countenance, from the elevated seat of the orchestra, he seized Leslie by the arm, and with a strength, which to Leslie's paralyzed nerves seemed that of a giant, dragged him towards the still fainting singer. At this moment Agnes, utterly unable to comprehend either the agitation of Leslie, or any part of the scene passing before her, but apprehensive from the sudden attack, as it seemed to her, of the foreigner upon Lord Arlington, that mischief was intended him, rushed forward, exclaiming, "Oh save my husband!"

"*Your* husband," replied the old man, in a voice of thunder! "YOUR husband! none has a right, either here or elsewhere, to address him by that title but that injured being, that being who now lies senseless before you, killed perhaps at last by the injuries and the desertion of this man: but God is merciful and just. His ways are inscrutable, but they lead to light at last; and now, in spite of his pretended death; in spite of villany heaped on villany; in spite of project after project to escape from the pursuit of his intended victim; behold the murderer of an injured woman's peace! the destroyer of her earthly happiness, and had his insidious arts been successful, of her heavenly hopes, at last open to the calls of offended justice."

"Away, imposter," cried Leslie in fury; and resuming his courage, "I am Lord Arlington. This is deception. What accusation canst thou have against Lord Arlington?" Leslie said this in the hope that the name might perhaps shield him.

"Sir Robert Leslie," vociferated the old priest, "Sir Robert Leslie is the man I call to justice, and thou art he. You know I am no impostor; you know yourself to be the husband of Angelica di Carini; you know this to be your wife, your legal wife, not only in the sight of that Heaven which witnessed your mutual vows, and which you would have dared to offend, and might have offended with impunity on earth; but also by those human laws which thou canst not evade: you know this; and you know that I have such irrefragable proofs afforded me by that beneficent stranger, to whom this injured being owes the preservation of her honor, that thou canst not escape."

Agnes, who, on Leslie's appeal as to the name of Arlington, had waited with breathless expectation for the reply, felt the heart-sickening conviction of the old man's truth, when in that reply he called him by the name of Leslie. These few moments had destroyed for her every hope of happiness on earth; she was the wife of a man whom she had no right to call husband, and this circumstance proved this man to be an unprincipled villain—her own spotless fame blemished—and her child, in whom so many of her hopes were centered, innocent as she was, cursed with the stain of illegitimacy. As these agonising thoughts crowded on her mind, a mist spread itself before her eyes, and fainting in the arms of those around her she was speedily conveyed to her own apartments.

Leslie, lashed into desperation, with one energetic exertion threw the old man from him with a force that sent him to the ground, then casting a look of fury mingled with contempt at the surrounding crowd, he strode out of the apartment, in spite of the cries of the old man to stop him; and before an hour had passed, was on the road to the Continent.

The Italian lady was borne senseless from the room. Lady Emily rushed to the consolation of her friend; and the guests having now indistinctly understood the circumstances which had interrupted the entertainment, departed as fast as their carriages could be summoned, mingling their regrets for the loss of the splendid supper they had promised themselves with a hundred exclamations of surprise at what had taken place, and many significant hints that they had always known that *all* was not right.

A few days after this scene had taken place, the following paragraph went the round of the morning papers.

"THE LATE MYSTERIOUS AFFAIR IN HIGH LIFE."

"We understand that, in consequence of the mysterious circumstances which have created so much distress in a certain noble family, that the London establishment has been broken up, one of the heads of it having departed *very suddenly* for the Continent, and the other being determined on the closest retirement. The Italian lady, whose presence it is said has been the cause of such a domestic revolution, is still under the hands of medical advisers, who give very few hopes of her recovery from the shock she has experienced."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

It was some years after these events that an English traveller was seen pursuing his lonely

course along the Via Emilia, and by the banks of the Trebia. He had travelled several times through the whole of Italy, and avoiding society, and showing an aversion to study the manners of the existing inhabitants of this "blue skied" country, seemed to live only with the dead.

As he stood upon the plains of Trebia, the names of Annibal, of Mago, of Scipio, and of Sempronius, rose before him, clad in all the pride of conquest, or sinking under the shame of defeat; and then came the idea of the lapse of that time, which conquers the conqueror—and of the little value of the difference between defeat and victory, when a few short years and the hand of death rendered them alike to the victor and the vanquished.

It was thus that our melancholy wanderer attempted to forget himself—and to lose every trace of existing circumstances, by a recurrence to those that had passed away into that abysm which swallows the memory of all things.

With a tenacity bordering on irritation he admitted no thought of the present. His servant—and he travelled with only one, who defrayed all the expenses, and made all the regulations of his journey—saved him all the trouble of travelling; and seldom interrupted his meditations, only contemplated him with an anxious and affectionate solicitude.

The traveller himself was verging towards fifty; but his brow, divested of all the locks which had graced his early manhood, and wrinkled by the hand of care, would have impressed an observer with the idea that he had numbered many more than that quantity of years, had not his athletic form and continued activity of body, preserved in his figure an appearance of youth, that gave the lie to his careworn countenance.

The expression of his face was that of a sedateness, created by the effect of a powerful mind to overcome the effect of misfortunes; and in the furrows of his brow, the contemplative observer might imagine a sad record of past misery.

As he approached the Pisatello, the Rubicon of the ancients, he entered a small, clean town, beautifully situated at the foot of a ridge of fine hills, which seemed to rise like giants from the plain to support the villas and convents, and the remains of a romantic old castle, which adorned their summits.

At the entrance to this little town standing insulated, was a neat cottage, approaching almost to the character of a villa. Its white front, its general proportions, together with the flowers and vines by which it was almost hidden, united with its extreme neatness and elegance, arrested the attention of our traveller. There was an approach to Englishism in the appearance of its garden and appurtenances, which particularly struck him; and one of those indefinable curiosities, for which we cannot account, came over his mind to know something of its inhabitants.

Almost surprised at a feeling so new to him, he desired his servant to put up for the night in the village; and driving to the only inn that afforded accommodation for travellers, he was speedily made the tenant of one of the only two private rooms that the house contained. These two apartments had been originally one, but the landlord had found his account in the solitary and exclusive propensities of English travellers, in dividing it by a thin partition, so as to form two separate, but small chambers.

His servant soon gave the officious padrone notice not to annoy his master with his civilities; and he was left alone to his contemplations. His eye wandered to the window, which commanded a complete, though distant, view of the cottage which had before attracted his particular attention. It was situated just upon the declivity of one of the hills; and from its elevated situation, was easily perceptible from all parts of the village. As he gazed upon this cottage with an interest for which he could not account, he observed several persons approach it with hurried steps, and after having a moment's conversation with the inmates, retire slowly; and the uplifted hands of some of these visiters on their return, seemed to be urging some petition to heaven, while the after pressure of the hand to the brow, as they seemed to dash a tear from their eyes, indicated that they had but slender hopes in the effect of their prayers.

Still interested, he knew not why, he determined to ascertain who were the inhabitants of this cottage; and he was on the point of astonishing his servant by this inquiry, when his attention was arrested by the sound of sobs below, and by the attempts of the landlord to soothe the grief of the person by whom they were uttered.

In a moment afterwards his servant entered, followed by a young Englishwoman in tears, who approached the traveller, attempted for some time to explain the meaning of her intrusion; at length, amidst sobs which she tried in vain to subdue, she uttered an incoherent sentence, in which "my mistress, my dear mistress," were the only words which her agitation rendered audible.

The traveller soothed her agitation, and entreated her to speak the cause of her trouble, and to tell him how he could assist her; at length becoming calmer, she told him that her mistress, an English lady, was dying—that she was given over—that a few hours must inevitably terminate her existence; and that having heard that an English gentleman had just arrived in the village, she had despatched her to the inn to entreat his presence for a few moments, as a witness to some of the acts which were necessary in the final settlement of her affairs. The messenger finished her recital with the exclamation of—"Oh, my dear, dear mistress—my dear mistress!"

In spite of his morbid melancholy, the traveller was instantly alive to all the feelings of kindness and benevolence; and seizing his hat, prepared to accompany the girl to her mistress.

As they passed through the village, every body addressed the servant with inquiries after *la bienissima signora Inglesa;* and the tears which started to their eyes, as the girl silently answered them only by a melancholy shake of the head, sufficiently testified their grief and their esteem for the English invalid.

His interest each moment increasing, he did not perceive the path he was pursuing, until he found himself at the wicket which led to the cottage, which had excited so much interest in his mind; an interest which now appeared to be the effect of presentiment. The wicket was opened, and they pursued their way through a narrow serpentine path, decorated with flowers and shaded by evergreens,

which, interlacing at the top, rendered it almost impervious to the sun. This path led to a Venitian window, opening into a small saloon, which formed a vestibule to the larger apartments of the house.

Here they were received by an Italian female domestic, likewise in tears, who, to the hurried and whispered inquiries of her fellow servant, only sobbed a "*No—no,—signora,*" and withdrew.

The English girl now requested the traveller to stay here while she communicated his arrival to her mistress, and passing into the next room, which seemed to be the principal apartment of the cottage, she disappeared through the folding doors at the other end, leaving, however, all the doors ajar in her progress.

Low murmurs now reached his ear, proceeding from the sick chamber; and he was presently informed that the dying lady would be ready to receive him in a few minutes.

The messenger closed the door as she departed; and he presently heard a noise like that of wheeling a couch into the next room, which was every now and then mingled with sighs and faint exclamations of pain from the exhausted invalid.

All was now again silent, and time seemed to be taken that the patient might recover the effect of the recent exertion; at length some footsteps softly approached, and opening the folding doors with such care that they made no noise, the English servant beckoned the traveller to approach.

The silent solemnity of the scene, the group of which he caught only an indistinct view through the doors, and the ideas connected with the circumstance of a countrywoman thus dying in a foreign land, all united still for a few moments to arrest his steps.

Recovering himself, however, and collecting all his firmness, he entered the apartment. The invalid was reposing on a large bed-chair, supported by pillows; on each side of her, resting upon the elbows of the chair, were an aged couple, evidently Italians: at a little distance, at her feet, on an ottoman, sat a female child, apparently about four or five years old—and at the back, were several domestics with handkerchiefs at the eyes, striving to prevent the effusions of that grief which would sometimes burst forth in spite of themselves. Guided by the pointing finger of the girl who had summoned him, the traveller advanced, and stood in the front of the dying person, who was so placed that the light fell full and equally upon both of them.

Their eyes met: a tremor—a convulsive start, that almost moved the chair which supported her, spoke the unusual agitation of the sick lady; while the alternately pale and flushed countenance—the eager gaze—the trembling limbs of the astonished traveller, as he caught at a table for support, betrayed some mutual recognition. In the pale face—the sunken cheek—the attenuated form of the dying person, the traveller thought he again saw the pallid and lifeless form of his first love; and the dying person recognised the tall and manly form which she had only once seen when he was weeping, and blessed her over the lifeless remains of her mother.

It was, indeed, Clifton, or rather Walmer and the daughter of her whom he had loved so truly—so devotedly—so lastingly; a daughter, whose happiness had ever been dear to him, though he had never seen her excepting in that one interview, when over the corpse of her mother they had mingled the tears of innocent childhood and virtuous manhood in a stream which fell upon the lifeless remains before them; a daughter, whose dying eyes he was now called upon to close, while she was yet in the earliest stage of life; and whom his various warnings had not been able to save from a fate of which he knew that the violence of her feelings were too likely to make her the victim.

The effect of her illness—her near approach to death—had given to Agnes a still more striking resemblance to her mother; and as Clifton gazed upon her at first, his mind was seized for a moment with the impression, that he was again looking upon the corpse of his "beloved Agnes Dornton;"—for by that name was her memory engraven upon his heart.

On the part of Agnes, the sight of Clifton had carried her mind and memory, at one stride, back to the days of her youth, to the death of her mother, and to all the misery she had experienced through that loss. Young as she had been, the effect of the scene with Clifton, in the chamber of death, was ineffaceable; and his person too strongly imprinted upon her memory, by the solemnity of the circumstances under which they met, for her ever to forget it. Perhaps, too, in the moment approaching death, and so near her own departure, it is natural for the mind to look back through all the life we have passed; and in such a retrospect, the prominent circumstances of existence paint themselves upon our memory in vivid colors, and give the mind a power of recognition and recollection which does not exist in the enjoyment of health and in mixture with society.

His person had also been kept continually in her memory from the circumstance of her having, since she had, so fatally for herself, discovered their truth, connected the mysterious warning she had once received, and those she had since heard of, with the person who had sworn to protect and to watch over her happiness in such a solemn moment.

Clifton would not perhaps have recognised Agnes in the bloom of health, but his heart could not mistake her in the strong resemblance she bore to the corpse of her mother—a sight that nothing could drive from his mind or his memory.

"It is—it is," said he, approaching the invalid, and almost kneeling, "it is Agnes, the daughter of——" He could not proceed—he could not utter the name of her who had influenced his destiny.

"It is, indeed," faintly articulated the dying Agnes: "it is the daughter of her we both wept over, and to whose spirit that of her daughter will soon be again united. Alas! why did it not quit me then, and accompany hers into realms of bliss without having——" Here she stopped every one around her seemed absorbed in grief; and Clifton, from having for so long a time kept under every expression of human feeling, was agitated beyond the immediate power of recovery.

Agnes was the first to gain her self possession; and tenderly pressing the hand that had taken hers—

"Come, sir," said she, "come, my second parent,

for such let me call you now, when I am so soon going to my eternal one—let me entreat you to calm this agitation. I have still some things to do in this world which I am quitting—not for myself, but for those I leave behind me—and I would willingly soothe this parting hour with the idea that every thing that I can do, is done for their comfort. As to consolation, time alone will bring that; though the knowledge that I am quitting a life of misery———"

She here breathed with difficulty, and Clifton would have prevented her continuance; but she waved her hand, and proceeded—

"No, no; my time is short; and Providence has sent me in you a guardian to yonder infant—for which my heart beats with thankfulness; and in hope of which I find a pleasure which I did not dare expect in these solemn moments. For the last week I have anxiously hoped that some English traveller might pass through the village; and I had directed that any such might have my dying request made to them for an interview, that I might deposit copies of the last disposition of my property in their hands, and entreat their temporary protection for her who will soon be parentless. The sight of you alters my view. Say, sir—dare I hope that the temporary protection, which was the first thing I sought, may be converted to perpetual guardianship?"

Clifton assented, and exerted himself sufficiently to draw up a paper constituting himself her sole executor, and guardian to the child, which she named Agnes Dornton. This was immediately signed, witnessed, and attached as a codicil to the will which she had employed all her strength, for the last few weeks, in writing.

When this was done, a smile played upon her pale features, and she said, "I am satisfied; then making a motion for every one to withdraw save Clifton and the child, they were left alone.

The child was seated close to her mother, and perfectly unconscious of the solemnity of the scene and the circumstances by which she was surrounded, continued picking her flowers to pieces, and scattering the fragments on the floor. Sometimes she would look up and smile in her mother's face, and hold out her lips for a kiss, and stretch out her arms for an embrace, which the feebleness of Agnes scarcely permitted her to grant.

Parting the locks which clustered on the child's forehead with one hand, and pointing to its countenance with the other, "Do you accept the charge?" said she.

"I do; and it shall be the business, as well as the pleasure of my life, to fulfil it completely. This child shall find a parent in one who never was a father, and it shall be my care so to guide her young mind—so to regulate her youthful heart—that she shall never be the prey—"

He stopped, he felt that he had touched a chord that must jar upon the mind of Agnes, and he was silent.

"Proceed, proceed," said she; "I know what you would say; and I bless God for having provided a guardian for my daughter who will give that regulation to her heart and feelings which her mother wanted. Poor child! what may she not have to pass through? The blot upon her birth, too;"—and here the color mantled on her cheek:—"but I have overcome my pride now. I look beyond this world; I have had a hard struggle to bring my heart down, and to submit; but it is past."

She stopped again, some internal pain or weakness oppressed her, and Clifton entreated her to repose herself, but she refused.

"My time is but short—an hour, perhaps, and these lips will be pale, and stiff, and cold; a little hour, and I shall be like that sainted mother over whom we wept together. But I will not agitate you; when I wished to see a countryman, and to interest him in the fate of this infant, I expected a stranger. All I had then to do was to have entrusted him with my will, and to have entreated him to see that my child was sent safely to England: but with you it is different. The sight of you has brought all the scenes of my past life before me: and the charge you have undertaken makes an account of circumstances subsequent to my quitting England your due."

It was in vain Clifton entreated her to stop—she would proceed. She then related her journey to Italy, to ascertain the truth of Leslie's former marriage; her discovery of the parents of Angelica reduced to poverty and despair by the loss of their child, and touched slightly upon the subsequent persecutions of Leslie.

"In these inquiries I discovered that an attempt had been made to deceive Angelica with a false marriage, which had been rendered abortive by an English stranger."

"I—I was the stranger," exclaimed Walmer. "But for me you would have been his wife—"

"You?" faintly asked Agnes.

"Yes. Accident brought me where I overheard the whole of the villanous plan projected; and by a communication with the Italian parties to the scheme, and a bribe superior to that which they had received, I substituted a real priest—was myself a secret witness of the ceremony—and made an attestation to that effect; a copy of which, in my handwriting, convinced Leslie that he was actually her husband. But proceed—"

"From the moment," continued she, "that I discovered that Angelica was really his wife—and that I—was—Oh God!—nothing but a dishonored woman, I determined never to see him more—yet—dare I confess it?—this rebel heart still continued to linger around the recollection of what I had pictured him to be, and I had daily and hourly struggles to reduce it to the performance of its duty—a duty rendered still more difficult by the persecutions of Leslie." Whenever she mentioned the name, her voice faltered still more. "Subsequent knowledge of him, however, rendered this duty easy; but I will not recur to this—I pity and forgive him—and now, even in my last hour, pray for him, and entreat his Maker to give him repentance while it is yet time. But he used me cruelly—broke the heart which doated on him." Here she struggled with her feelings. "But why should I complain?—mine was not the only heart he has broken.—But again—I forgive and pray for him. When I found the parents of the unhappy Angelica poor and wretched, I could not help feeling that, perhaps, I had been accessary to the fate of their daughter. They did not know me—they know me not as yet, excepting as a betrayed and deserted woman; and the similarity of my fate to that of

their daughter has created an interest in them which has made them second parents to me, as I have tried to prove a second daughter to them. I persuaded them to leave their native village, which is in a distant part of Italy, to reside with me here; and I have derived my only pleasure, the last three years, in contributing to their comforts. I have provided for them at my death. My great aim has been to bring my heart and mind into a proper frame to meet the moment now so near—so very near at hand—and I have done it. Oh! sir, the death-blow was given *then*—THEN!" and she spoke with more energy. "But the heart is strong—and long—long breaking—though it *will* break at last." She breathed with difficulty. Clifton could not speak: the child was all unconscious, "And on its dying mother smiled."

Her respiration became more difficult; he would have summoned the attendants, but she restrained him, and pointed to the window—faintly articulated "Air—air—to breathe."

Clifton opened, it, and the pure air rushed in, perfumed with the flowers over which it had passed. Its freshness seemed to revive her; she half rose from the pillow, and gazed through the open window. The sun was setting in large floods of crimson and gold directly opposite to the house; the wide landscape, with its trees, and fields, and rivers, seemed to glow with its setting beams; the distant Trebia glittered as it wound through the plains, and all the windows of the villas, and churches, and convents, seemed to glance reflected fire.

"It is a beautiful world," she said, "is it not? Why are there those who spoil it? Hark!—hark!—surely I am dying, and I hear the strains that welcome me to heaven!" Clifton thought her senses wandered.

At this moment the distant peal of an organ was heard, and the voices of the nuns in the neighboring convent arose in all the harmony of the evening vespers; as the sound reached the vale, it was increased by the voice of the villagers, who, from windows and doors, joined in the devotion of the "rosario."

Mellowed by distance, it did indeed seem the music of another sphere. Agnes looked upwards, as though she expected to see some unearthly musicians.

"My mother seems to call me," she faintly murmured. Her arms then attempted to embrace her child, who had now fallen asleep. She gazed at the landscape—but her eye grew gradually glazed and unconscious—the sun threw its last beam of day on her pallid countenance—the strains died away in gentle murmurs—and as the last sounds floated in the air, a slight convulsion was perceptible on the lips; and the instant after she fell back on her pillow and breathed her last.

Clifton sunk on his knees, and burying his face in the drapery, remained absorbed in his grief, unable to summon any of the household to say that she was gone.

——white in her soul to fill a throne
Of innocency and sanctity in heaven.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE moment that the spirit of Agnes had departed, and that Walmer felt, from the chilly inanimation of the hand he held, that the vital spark had really fled, a sigh of unutterable agony burst from his heart. He seemed again to lose the Agnes, the beloved of his youth: he seemed again to feel all those miseries which that loss had occasioned him.

With these feelings he quitted the house of death, and pursued his course to the inn. Every thing was still and quiet without, and the clear blue sky, with its bright calm moon, and its myriad of stars, tranquillised his mind.

On his arrival, he found the court-yard of the little alberga filled with horses and servants Two carriages were drawn up at the door; and from his room, through the thin partition which divided the apartments of the little inn, he heard the sobs of a female. They suddenly increased till they became almost hysterical, and faltering accents, which bespoke acute distress, were uttered in a soft Italian voice, and were soothed by that of a man who spoke the language with a foreign accent. The latter voice breathed an English curse or two at the delay of the horses. The female, by her tone of supplication, seemed to be pleading, but it was all uttered so softly, that Walmer could not catch the words. Sometimes reproaches were uttered, and attempted to be calmed by tenderness; then a flood of tears altogether stopped every sound but those of sighs, which seemed to come from a bursting heart. These were succeeded by agonising expressions of fear and anxious entreaty to return, which seemed to create an impatience almost arising to an expression of temper on the part of her companion, which again caused fresh floods of tears; and these were again soothed by a promise on the part of the other that they should return instantly, and an assurance that they should still be in time. Hurried and impatient steps were heard across the apartment, and the quick opening and shutting of the door and window, as the traveller called out his hurried inquiries after horses, in Italian, French, and English, betrayed the anxiety, at least, of one of the parties to proceed. Then again all was silent, save the convulsive sobs of the female, who frequently exclaimed that she was an unhappy and lost wretch. Then a slight struggle, and a burning kiss, and smothered emotions of mingled love and anger—struggles, as it appeared to Walmer, between temptation and virtue. Interrupted and agitated as the conversation was, he thought that he could discover that the parties were a runaway wife and her paramour, and that the deluded lady had already repented her rash step, and would return if her seducer would permit her.

This idea was confirmed as the conversation became more collected, and consequently more audible. Walmer now collected from her reproaches, that she had been betrayed by some perfidy into

the present step involuntarily. These were replied to by soothings—by oaths—by protestations of fidelity. By "words which burn," and which seemed to be but too welcome, and to make but too deep an impression upon the hearer. Her sighs became less frequent and softer. Her reproaches were uttered in a more tender accent. She seemed upon the point of relenting, and Walmer had almost determined to rush into the presence of the parties to sustain her sinking virtue, and offer her a protector back to the husband and the home which she had quitted, when his steps were arrested, and the whole current of his blood turned, by the exclamation of "O Signor Leslie!" which burst for the first time from the lips of the female.

As though the eye of the basilisk had fallen upon him—as though the finger which petrified Niobe had touched him, Walmer was struck motionless. He scarcely believed his ears, and watched with breathless suspense for some succeeding sound, which should confirm or annihilate his suspicion that he was indeed under the same roof with him whom he had, within an hour, so bitterly cursed—with him whose work of cruelty he had, within an hour, seen accomplished—with him who had destroyed the peace of mind, and the life of the favorite child of Agnes Dornton.

The name had been uttered in a half tone of tenderness—in a tone in which softness and yielding were mingled with reproach; and a silence of some minutes succeeded, till, as it seemed with exertion, the voice again exclaimed—"Mai—Mai! Signor Leslie."

Walmer's determination was speedily concluded. He seized a pen—wrote a few hurried lines, and hastened from his apartment, to despatch it to him to whom it was addressed.

In the mean time, Leslie—for it was indeed Leslie, was using the whole of his rhetoric to allay the fears of his companion—to soothe her into quietude, and to prevent her from returning, which she had most vehemently petitioned to do.

He was reclined on a *fauteuil*, with his arms round her waist. She was half upon her knees, as though she had even used that humble position to entreat that he would spare her. Her dark hair had escaped from her travelling hat—her eyes were suffused with tears—her bosom palpitated—and she still entreated, though with less energy, that he would be generous and save her, while she might still return with safety and with honor. But Leslie was too much accustomed to sighs and tears, to be moved from his purpose; and he had too light an idea of woman's repentance, and more particularly an Italian woman's, to anticipate all the horrors which this unfortunate lady pictured to herself.

He drank up her tears with burning kisses, every one of which only added strength to his determination, and breathed promises of fidelity—of love—of pleasure—in return for her sighs. He pictured in glowing terms the life of love they might lead—the delights of gratified passion—the days and years of bliss that awaited them—and found that remorse was giving way to brighter anticipations, when La Tour entered the apartment with a letter.

"Qu'est que c'est?"

"Un billet, monsieur."

"De qui?"

"D'un étranger—d'un monsieur Anglais."

"Qui me connoit?"

"Oui, monsieur."

"Et tu, maraud—tu lui as dit mon nom?"

"Non, monsieur. Il me l'a dit lui-meme. me disait qu'il étoit inutile de le nier—qu'il savait bien que monsieur étoit———"

"Silence!—donnez.—Ha!—what do I see—the handwriting—THE handwriting—still wet too—still freshly written——" and all languages but his own fled from his memory and his power, in his astonishment at again seeing that handwriting which had so often crossed him in his career, and at the knowledge that the mysterious penman was so close at hand.

He tore open the letter, heedless of the anxious glance of his companion. It simply said—"An English woman requires the attendance of Sir Robert Leslie; a countryman awaits him at the garden gate, to conduct him where his presence is required. It will be time enough to proceed in his present pursuit when the scene is past—which he *must* witness.—Leslie must not fail, and he must come alone."

Recollections of assassination came over his mind as he perused the billet. But these were quickly banished from his fearless mind—and all was absorbed in the intense curiosity to discover the mysterious correspondent, and in the desire of punishing his frequent interference with his schemes.

"Dites que je viens lui joindre."

"Monsieur, il est parti."

"Eh bien, je pars aussi—Restez-vous ici—Que les chevaux soient prets a mon retour." Then turning to the trembling lady, who had sat silently gazing at this inexplicable scene, he soothed her terror—told her it was but a civility required of him by a compatriot, which would be paid in a few minutes—that he should return before the horses were ready; consigned her to La Tour's especial care, with directions not to permit her to escape—seized a small dress sword which lay loosely among the baggage that strewed the floor; and hastily throwing his travelling cloak round him, proceeded to the garden gate.

Arrived at the spot, he looked eagerly around, but could see nobody; and he was almost beginning to imagine that he had been deceived, when he started at suddenly beholding a tall figure close at his side, wrapped up in a long cloak, and pointing to a path that led a little to the right up the mountain, in the direction of some villas, whose windows glittered like plates of silver in the white light of the moon.

Leslie receded, and cast an inquiring look at his conductor—hesitated for a moment—then addressing himself to the adventure—would have demanded who and what were the persons that required his attendance in this imperious manner.

Walmer waved his hand in silence—and so commanding was his action that Leslie involuntarily obeyed—and followed his long and rapid strides through the serpentine path that presented itself.

Walmer's figure was remarkably tall, and looked of a still greater height from the drapery of the cloak in which it was enveloped. Leslie could catch no glimpse of his features; but as he followed his

dark figure—rendered still more dark by its contrast with the moonlight, and when it gained much in advance of him, appearing relieved only by the clear though deep-blue sky, he almost fancied it was some supernatural being—some Mephistophiles leading him to his fate—his mind recurred too to all the mysterious warnings that Agnes had received, in the same handwriting—to the mysterious interference in the affair with Angelica—and a shuddering crept through his frame in spite of himself and in spite of that daring audacity which was one of his most conspicuous characteristics.

Everything around was so silent, that every footstep of the stranger that fell upon the pathway almost produced an echo, and was the only sound that met his ear, except his own hard breathing. The stranger proceeded; they left two or three small cottages to the left, and approached one in which a light still burned. At the entrance wicket Walmer stopped, and turning round, appeared like a being of superior power waiting for his victim. Here Leslie caught a slight glimpse of his countenance as the moon fell upon it; but he saw nothing distinctly, except the flash of a dark eye that seemed to glance at him with indignation.

This was sufficient to brace every nerve; it roused his courage into action; and he followed through the wicket and up the covered walk with a step almost as proud and firm as that of his conductor.

Here the overhanging branches nearly obscured them from the light of the moon, and the entrance seemed to open almost magically to the word of Walmer. He beckoned Leslie to enter. They passed through the anti-chamber, then the drawing room, at the farther end of which a light was seen through the door. A faint smell, as of faded flowers, pervaded these apartments, and for a moment Leslie felt their sickening influence; but the tread of his conductor, as it now fell heavily on the boarded floor, recalled his attention.

At the door of the inner apartment Walmer stopped, and holding it a moment in his hand, he turned suddenly round, and in a deep, solemn voice, he uttered—"Prepare!"

"For what?" said the dauntless Leslie.

"For that which, if thou hast a human heart, will break it. For that which, if thou hast one grain of the common feelings of humanity, will wring them to agony! For that which, if thou hast one particle of conscience, will touch it with never dying remorse!"

Leslie was thunderstruck—he knew not what to expect—his mind wandered through the labyrinths of his memory of the past and anticipations of the future, to divine what was to come: yet he was fearless.

"Lead on—I am prepared for any thing."

"Enter!" exclaimed Walmer, in a voice of thunder; "enter, and behold thy work!"

He threw open the door, and Leslie beheld a couch, with tapers placed at its head and feet. The couch was covered with a sheet, on which were strewn sprigs of rosemary and yew. Just over it, at the head, was a large picture, covered with a green curtain. By its side was a small desk, on which was a missal and a rosary, as though some one had been recently praying there. The window, which reached to the ground, was partly open, so that the flames of the tapers flickered in the night breeze, and rendered the light still more doubtful. The forms which the sheet that covered the couch presented, were too defined not to convey at once to the eye that a corpse was concealed beneath it.

Leslie started—he hesitated. Walmer advanced to the couch, and, laying his hand upon the sheet, slowly and solemnly exclaimed, "Approach, and contemplate thy work!" Perceiving his hesitation, "Ha! dost fear the effects of crime, and yet not fear to commit it?"

The word fear acted like electricity upon the nerves of Leslie; he approached firmly; Walmer threw off the covering suddenly, and Leslie shrunk back shuddering, and pale, and trembling, as the hollow and sunken features, and thin and attenuated form of Agnes met his view; a convulsive shudder crept through his whole frame; his hair had the sensation of bristling upon his head, and every nerve seemed to vibrate to some unpleasant, some unnatural touch.

He wished to withdraw his eyes, but could not. His feet seemed the only steady part of his whole frame; and they felt rooted to the floor.—Nature burst forth in huge drops of perspiration, which rolled down his forehead; his hand involuntarily stretched itself out, as though it would have some palpable proof of the reality of the object before him—but shrunk back before it came in contact with the corpse.

At length, and as if with a powerful effort, he closed his eyes; but they were in an instant again wide open, and again fixed upon the object, which seemed to fascinate their glance.

Another effort enabled him to turn them for a moment from the dead form of Agnes to the living one of his conductor, which seemed to tower into supernatural proportions as he contemplated with his keen, dark, yet solemn eye, the agitation of Leslie from the other side of the couch, from which he pointed to the corpse.

The present scene, and the events of the evening, had wrought up the mind of Walmer to a species of unnatural excitement, and he witnessed the agony of Leslie with a feeling bordering on delight.

"Ha! ha! and thou canst feel? Glad am I that all is not dead within thee, for then this scene will wring thy soul. Look! look!! look!!!" and his voice rose, as he repeated the word, into a tone of fierceness—"look at all that was once so lovely; look at all that was once so gay, so happy, and so innocent. But innocent she was to the last; even thy demoniac power could not blast her innocence. But thou destroyed her happiness; you broke her heart. The flowers of her existence were withered under thy pestilential influence; her youth, her loveliness, her goodness, her life, were sacrificed to thine accursed selfishness. She was kind and confiding, and you betrayed her. You found her beaming with life, gayety, animation, and talent; and you leave her a senseless corpse, cut off in the commencement of her career. Mark these hollow, sunken cheeks, and recollect the bloom thou foundst upon them. Mark these death-like, ghastly eyes, and remember the glances of intelligence with which they beamed. Look at this attenuated form, worn out with suffering, from

which she had no refuge but the grave, and damn thyself with the thought that it is thine accursed work. Oh, God of heaven!" and he suddenly lifted up his hands in the action of prayer—"how inscrutable are thy ways! that such a man—such a monster—should be permitted still to crawl upon thy earth to blast the fairest of thy creatures! Keep down, I beseech thee, this rebellious heart, that would engender the thoughts adverse to thy justice and to thy wisdom, when I see guilt standing before me in the full enjoyment of health and strength, and means to accomplish more crime—and innocence blighted in its bud, a pale corpse, lifeless in the very presence of the destroyer, Sir Robert Leslie! for that was the name under which this crime was committed, and no title can ennoble it:" and he turned his eyes from heaven and fixed them full upon the guilty being before him, who seemed struck speechless with astonishment and horror. "Sir Robert Leslie!" and his voice was raised to an almost unnatural pitch, when the inner door of the apartment was burst open, and the aged couple rushed into the room, exclaiming in Italian—

"Leslie! who names Leslie? who calls upon that accursed name—the betrayer of our only hope—the destroyer of our only child!"

Walmer, in the absorbing feelings which had been excited by Agnes, had forgotten every thing else.

Leslie gazed upon the aged pair without recognition. They looked at him with loathing and horror, and again renewed their exclamations and reproaches,

"Who, and what are you," hoarsely murmured Leslie, "that you bellow your curses in my ear? What have I done to you? Who have I betrayed—what have I destroyed of yours?"

Hurried footsteps were heard in the garden; they approached the house,—suddenly, the window was pushed open, and a female, whose dishevelled hair and disordered dress could not conceal her beauty, entered the room and rushed towards Leslie, screaming, in Italian, "Oh, save me, save me! He is here—he is come!—he follows me—he will not believe me innocent!"

"Who?" demanded Leslie, roused to animation by her appearance.

"My husband—your friend—Villars!! Save me! Explain that I am not the guilty being he thinks me!" she frantically exclaimed—"thou knowest that I am not!"

Leslie started—"Ha! is it so?—is he here?"

"I will save you," uttered Walmer, in a voice of thunder—"save you from the precipice upon which you stand—save you from the demon who has plotted your destruction. Look here!"—and he almost dragged her to the couch—"look here! this is one of his victims! Look upon it, and tremble! For such will you soon be if you believe in him!"

She cast one hurried glance upon the corpse, uttered a piercing scream, and fainted in Walmer's arms.

Leslie looked for a moment upon the whole group, and rushed through the window into the garden, to the encounter which he knew awaited him with his betrayed friend, Frederick Villars.

CHAPTER XL.

Leslie rushed through the casement that had been left open by the last unexpectant visitant, and dashing over plants and flowers, leaped the wicket into the road. The balmy freshness of the night-breeze a little relieved the heat of his brain; but still he rushed on for a few minutes like the chafed lion escaped from the toils of the hunter, but still smarting under his wounds. Stung almost to madness by the severity of the lesson he had received, and struggling against the remorse which had for a moment taken possession of his heart; and inflicted a pang which he had never felt before, he yet could not conquer his desire of vengeance on that being who had so frequently crossed his will, and who had now for the first time been seen and identified; and he was angry with himself that he had permitted the superiority of virtue, and the overwhelming and imposing manners of the stranger, to have had such power over him.

The sight of Villars turned the agitation of Leslie in a moment into his usual sang-froid.

"Ha, Fred! Well met—the quickest work is the best. Between friends the less ceremony the better. I know what I owe thee; and you know I am ever found willing to pay every debt I owe in the world, whether their payment draw upon my fortune or my life."

"I know, Leslie, that thou art a faithless scoundrel—I know, Leslie, that there is no tie, however sacred, that will bind thee; that friendship, honor, virtue, all are sacrificed by the hellish selfishness of thy predominant passion."

"Hard words, Fred—hard words—friendship! why true, we have been friends; but as to honor and virtue, dost think these words sound better from your lips than from mine?"

"This is trifling, sir—I know thee."

"Well, Fred, and you knew me before. You have known me all my life, from infancy, when we were whipped by the same nurse; in our boyhood, when we played the same games; in our manhood, when we have fought, drank, and intrigued together; aye, Fred, to this moment, when we stand determined to cut each other's throats, or blow out each other's brains—which is it to be? the choice is thine."

"I have my pistols with me; you are as much accustomed to them as I am."

"True, Fred, those same pistols have served my turn before this, when you were my second instead of my adversary. They will be the fit, though not the silent witnesses of our meeting; and here comes La Tour, who shall evidence our fair play, should any awkward occurrence terminate our interview; for I can never forget that C——— was hanged for shooting his man without a witness."

Leslie's apparent coolness stung Villars to the quick; and boiling with rage, he was giving vent to a tissue of execrations, when he was interrupted by Leslie, who stopped him by saying—

"Tush—tush, Fred, this is unmanly. Thy pistols will do quite as much execution without all these hard words. Thy passion, man, will never give thy bullet a truer aim, or add one atom of

weight to the lead of which it is composed. We have lived as friends; let us part like gentlemen."

The calm face and easy attitude of Leslie strongly contrasted with the flushed and angry countetenance, and energetic position which the roused passion of Villars presented. His hands were extended, in the act of offering one of the pistols to Leslie; while the other was grasped with a trembling hand, that endangered the discharge of one of Wogden's hair triggers.

"Take the pistol—take the pistol!" exclaimed, or rather bellowed, Villars; "lest I do myself summary justice, and inflict my vengeance without giving you your *gentlemanly* chance of escape. Take it. They are equally good. You know there is no choice between them, and I do not offer it.

"Why Fred, you are mad; what, here in the high road, within pistol shot of the village! why, man, you would wake the whole neighborhood, and perhaps make discoveries.——But I will not jest. La Tour, take the pistols from Mr. Villars; follow us, and be silent."

He led the way into a grove on his left, and in a moment they were enveloped in the dark shade of the trees. The ground was measured by La Tour, and the two friends took their places.

* * * * * *

The eyes of both parties were fixed on La Tour. The handkerchief dropped. The loud report broke upon the stillness of the night—and was repeated by a hundred echoes.

La Tour had closed his eyes when he gave the signal. He reopened them the moment he heard the discharge, and a rush of pleasure came over his heart as he saw both the parties standing in the same position. The hand of Villars was extended with his pistol pointed at Leslie, whose arm hung by his side, still holding the weapon.

This relief to the excited feelings of La Tour was, however, but momentary, as Leslie evidently showed a difficulty in keeping his position. The pistol dropped from his relaxed hold—he staggered a pace or two backwards, and fell to the ground.

The moment Villars saw him fall he dashed his pistol to the earth, and rushed to the spot. La Tour was on his knees at his master's head an instant after. Leslie lay extended at full length. The contortions of his body showed the agonies which he suffered, and the compression of his lips, one of which he held tightly between his teeth, displayed the struggle he was making against the influence of pain. His eyes were closed, his hands clenched, and large drops of perspiration hung upon his forehead.

As Villars gazed upon his pale face, old associations revived in his bosom; his desire of revenge subsided—his passion melted into softness—remorse stole into his heart, for the sacrifice which his honor had required, and he called in a voice almost amounting to agony upon Leslie.

"Leslie—Leslie—Leslie!" and he raising his voice with each repetition of the name, "Leslie—my friend—Leslie——"

Leslie opened his eyes: he still struggled with his pain; and his spirit—his indomitable spirit for a moment mastered it. "Fred—you need not —call so loud.—My—my—spirit—or whatever it is that is—to go from me—has not gone so far on its way—yet—but that it hears thee."

He sunk back nearly exhausted, and La Tour tore his own shirt sleeve off to replace the piece of linen that had been first applied, and which was now completely saturated with blood.

Villars could not speak; he held his hand, and returned its feeble pressure.

Leslie again opened his eyes; he fixed them upon the countenance of Villars; he there read the regained ascendancy over his old associate; and that vanity which made him glory in leading and misleading all the spirits by whom he was surrounded, glimmered faintly in his heart, and even in this awful moment, quivering between life and death, trembling between time and eternity, he thought more about preserving the fearless and reckless gayety of his character, and of dying like Mercutio, than of summoning his fortitude from a better source and for a better purpose.

"Fred," said he, "I would ask your forgiveness; but—but—I am not—I have not—;" here he struggled stoutly with his agony, nor suffered it to be perceptible through any other means than the perspiration which hung upon his forehead, in large globules;—"I would say—Fred, that your wife—" Villars started from him at the word—"is innocent —pure—for me;" seeing Villars' doubting countenance, "it is true—true—I deceived her into her temporary absence."

"Oh, Leslie! did I dare believe you; did I dare trust your words! Upon all other points I know your lips never uttered a falsehood; but upon these —" he stopped.

"You think—I never uttered—a truth—eh, Fred?" thus Leslie finished the sentence for him. "How can I convince you? Shall I swear? alas! have we not so often laughed at everything sacred, that there is nothing left by which to swear, with any hope that you might think I respected it; but by the word of a Leslie, which was never forfeited to man;" and his energy gave him a momentary strength, "I assure you I speak that which is the fact."

He read in Villars' eye his conviction of the truth of his statement; and again the lighter part of his character assumed his ascendancy, and pulling Villars towards him, he continued, "Yes, Villars, 'tis true—your wife has many—many—many good points;" he groaned—"and recollect—that nothing—is—quite perfect."

"We had better take some steps to remove him," said Villars to La Tour, who thought, from his closed eyes, that he had fainted.

"No—no—not yet. It will produce fever. Let me lie—the air revives me;" and he seemed to derive fresh vigor from it.

Villars still urged the immediate removal, or that La Tour should go for a surgeon: but Leslie would not permit either. He remarked, if any thing should happen while left alone with Villars, it might have an awkward appearance. On Villars still pressing, he said, "Come—come, Fred; it isn't fair—one can't argue so freely with a bullet in one's body. Besides, you must fly; you must go and protect your wife, and I have something more to say—all the rest I will write, for I fear you have given me plenty of leisure. Fred—Fred, it was

your own fault. You—you put it into my head first—years ago—and my devil has been edging me on—ever since. Why did you trust me ?"

"Our long friendship !" exclaimed Villars.

"Friendship ! aye, Pylades and Orestes—Damon and Pythias. But, Fred, there was no Mistress Orestes; no Mistress Pythias—depend upon it." Here he groaned in spite of his utmost efforts.—"There were no pretty wives in the case;"—La Tour wiped his forehead :—but yours is innocent." A sudden thought seemed to come over him, and produced a smile. "I say Fred," he continued, you musn't let Mrs. Villars think the worse of me for this circumstance; it musn't be known, lest I should lose my character." Again a groan forced its way into utterance. "And I say, Fred, pray apo—apologise for me to her—for—having given her so—much—trouble, and for having brought her so far—so far—for——nothing !" and he fainted from excess of agony.

Villars and La Tour took advantage of his insensibility, and binding his wound as well as circumstances would permit, they bore him gently to the inn, from which Villars, convinced of the innocence of his wife, both by the confession of Leslie and her own explanation, instantly departed, arranging with La Tour how he should communicate the result of his master's wound.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE CONCLUSION.

The circumstances which had led to the rencontre detailed in the last chapter were simply these : From the time that Leslie ceased to persecute Agnes he had, in company with Villars, pursued his former career in different parts of the continent, until the latter had fallen desperately in love with a young Venitian lady, and finding it impossible to compass his ends by any other means, had actually married her.

Called by his affairs so suddenly to Paris, that he could not take his wife, he placed her under the care of a part of her family in Italy, and proceeded on his route, accompanied by Leslie. This made the separation easier, as he felt, in spite of all their friendship, that he could not trust Leslie in his absence. Unfortunately Leslie guessed this, and the demon which was always tempting him, suggested to his mind the idea of feigning illness at Geneva, for the purpose of making Villars proceed without him. This Villars was compelled to do, Leslie promising to follow immediately, or to wait his return there. The moment, however, that the whip of Villars' postilion was out of hearing, La Tour was summoned—and away posted Leslie back to his friend's wife. The intimacy in which they had lived afforded him every opportunity—till what she had at first received as mere gallantries assumed a more serious meaning. Nothing, however, had entered her mind and heart contrary to the duty of a wife; and Leslie was obliged to have recourse to stratagem to get her into his power. He forged a letter from Villars, saying he was taken ill on his return homewards, and desiring his wife to come under the escort of Leslie to join him. His plan succeeded; nor had she discovered the deception till their arrival at the little inn. Villars in the mean time, finding Leslie had departed the moment he had quitted, suspecting his intriguing disposition, pushed on with redoubled speed—arrived just after the flight of Leslie, immediately pursued him, and overtook him as before described.

The symptoms by which the wound was accompanied, induced his medical attendants to inform him of their dread of a fatal result. Leslie would not believe them, and attempted to ridicule them either as indulging groundless fears, or from their want of surgical skill. But the grave and pale face of La Tour soon convinced him that there was more in their fears than he dared acknowledge; and, for the first time, the idea of death came over him, accompanied by an impatience, and a dread which he was ashamed to show, and which he attempted to allay by his old habit of writing to Villars. Stretched on a couch, therefore, that commanded a beautiful view of the surrounding country from the window, for he would not go to bed; at every interval of pain he wrote follows:—

LESLIE TO VILLARS. (Written at intervals.)

Fred—Fred, I always told you, you were never a sure shot. I little thought though that I should have lived to prove it as I do now. Why—why, would you never take my advice and practice ? If you had done so—and I am to die—why you might have done my business at once; and not thus unskilfully have left me to linger, and die, as it were by inches.

* * * * *

That fellow, La Tour, has just been here, with his pale face, and hollow sunken eye—the very reverse of his former self; and what do you think he wanted ? Faith, nothing; but to persuade me to have a priest—a priest, forsooth—a physician for the soul—a rascal with an absolution to be purchased for a few pauls—a fellow professing to make up my long account; and to balance it with a wet wafer and Latin *Salvo Domine.*

Fred, if there be an account to be rendered !—Fred, if there be a day of judgment !—Fred, if there be a hereafter ! both you and I shall need a much longer time than these stupid doctors tell me is now allotted to me in this world to settle our accounts. Ages—ages, Fred, would scarcely be enough, if those which we have called pleasures are crimes; if those which we have———But nonsense; it is impossible, and I'll not believe it; and if I am to die, why, for my own comfort, I will die in the same sentiments that I have preached and lived.

* * * * *

I have been used to will, and to do, all my life; and never recollect saying I WILL, that I did not. Is then the power of volition to fail me only now, when I say I will live ? No—no, life is strong within me. These physicians judge by their own

emaciated fragile bodies: they have no idea how much such a firm knit, athletic frame as mine can suffer; and yet the devils tell me I shall die: and as they pronounced the fiat, a legion of other devils seemed to enter, and riot in my mind; and appeared to dance about me, laughing and chattering, with a kind of hellish joy, as though it were to welcome me. Where—where—*where*, to welcome me?

* * * * * * * *

Die—impossible! what I, with thousands of acres of fair, unencumbered estate? How many thousands are there, Fred? you know. But to my mind they, at this moment, appear, while I am, as it were, looking back at them, diminished to a speck. Though if they were but a speck, yet give me that speck, and let me cling to it so long as it is on this side of —— of what? I know not; my pen wanders with my mind, and I know not where either of them are going to. But is it reasonable—is it just?—No—no, it cannot be, that I—in the possession of thousands of acres of land, forest, and water; of woodland and hill, and dale, and villages, and fields full of every living thing—should be reduced to a narrow spot of six feet by two. That I, the owner of a princely mansion, with halls full of ancestors, and saloons full of costly furniture, should be shut up in a deal box, without even a hole to breathe through. Shut up close—faugh! how my soul sickens: soul—*did* I say soul? And yet those very ancestors possessed the same estates, the same mansions; and they, and their all, are contained within these narrow limits. This comes like a damning fact—

* * * * * * * *

Fred, I have been trying to summon to my aid all the arguments of those philosophers in whom we used so much to delight, from the ancients down to Voltaire and Rousseau; and mind has clung with an indescribable tenacity to all those which were wont to be so convincing to us in the heyday of our enjoyments, and they are all fresh in my memory. I can repeat them every word; but it is all in vain: all their strength, all their seeming truth, seems to elude my grasp, like the phantoms in my dream. As I catch at them, and attempt to hang my faith upon them, they all dissolve one after another into airy nothingness, and all at the word *death*. This magic word seems to dispel all those dreams of philosophy, upon the truth of which we so sincerely pinned our faith.—DEATH! how I hate the word; and yet, if I look through my window, I see it written in gigantic characters on the broad blue sky. If I look round my chamber, I see it inscribed like the fate of Belshazzar on the walls, and printed in the pale faces of my physicians and servants. If I bury my face in my pillow, I see it there — death! — death!—DEATH! — nothing but DEATH written every where. Who would think that five simple letters could produce a word with so much terror in it! Oh!——

THE END.

THE OXONIANS.

BEING A SEQUEL TO

THE ROUÉ; OR, THE HAZARDS OF WOMEN.

A DOMESTIC ROMANCE, PUBLISHED IN LONDON TWENTY-FOUR YEARS AGO,

AND GENERALLY ATTRIBUTED TO AND SAID BY ALL TO BE WRITTEN

BY SIR EDWARD LYTTON BULWER.

AUTHOR OF "THE ROUE," "ZANONI," "NIGHT AND MORNING," "LUCRETIA," "LAST OF THE BARONS," "EUGENE ARAM," "DEVEREUX," "LAST DAYS OF POMPEII," "ALICE," "THE DISOWNED," "ERNEST MALTRAVERS," "RIENZI," "PAUL CLIFFORD," "PELHAM," "HAROLD," ETC., ETC.

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CHAPTER I.

QUITTING COLLEGE.

Who wouldn't send a son to college,
To gather there all kinds of knowledge
To stuff his head with Greek and Latin,
Till the classics he is put in;
To hunt, to swear, to drink, to dine
And fit him for a grave divine—ANON.

"ONE, two, three—hip, hip, hip—hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!" was vociferated by some six or seven voices in tones which indicated very little sense as to the immediate occasion of their hilarity, or much knowledge of the toast which had called for the honor of the libation and the cheer which followed it. Hurrah! was again hiccupped, once or twice, like shots fired after a volley by muskets which had hung fire through not being properly primed and loaded.

These sounds issued from an apartment in one of the minor inns in Oxford, in which six or eight gentlemen Commoners were assembled for the purpose of taking leave of two of their companions who were on the point of quitting the University.

These were the Honorable Henry Lascelles and Frank Hartley, cousins of nearly the same age and standing; but as different in character as light from darkness; the first delighting in slang, the latter in sentiment; the first all noise, bustle, and boisterous gayety, the best driver of a tandem, the boldest rider, and the most expert rower in Oxford; the latter pursuing all these avocations in turn, according to the whim of the moment or the example of his companions, but mingling them with reading; mixing up all the few realities of his gay life with the poetry of his own imagination, and giving that dash of the romantic, which is the general accompaniment of an amiable mind, to any common circumstance that occurred. The above words, slang and sentiment, however, sum up the essential of their difference of character.

The time was come when their education was considered as completed. Hartley had taken his first degrees. Lascelles had attemped no such thing. He could drive, ride, and box; he knew the anatomy and points of a horse; the odds on the Darby, and was already initiated into making a prospective book for the St. Leger. He was deep in the science of pugilism; on shake-hand terms with its professors; he could work the mail; and he considered himself sufficiently knowing to enter the world, sit for his hereditary borough, legislate for the country, and spend his own income! and having now neither parents nor guardians, but inheriting his fortune from an uncle, being completely his own master, he determined to try the experiment: and who with such a mind, such accomplishments, and seven thousand a-year, would not have done the same? To celebrate their departure he had persuaded Hartley to join him in asking some fellow collegians to sup at the inn at which the mail stopped as it passed through

stopped till he had reached a small picket gate, which formed the entrance to a neat though humble mansion in the suburbs. He cast his eyes anxiously towards a window that looked into the front of the court, and in which the undisturbed and steady burning light, gleaming through the dimity curtain, plainly spoke that the inmate had retired to rest.

This was the signal. All then was safe, and he took a circuitous route to arrive at the back of the house, where, climbing over the decayed wall, he found himself in one of those gardens with which our ancestors some centuries since always decorated their houses in towns and their environs, and silently stole up a green walk towards a summer-house in which he had spent many happy hours.

The moon shone so brightly as to make him keep within the shadow of the trees, lest its light might betray him to the prying eye of some of the neighbors, whose windows overlooked the garden.

His foot-fall was so silent on the greensward, that nothing but the ear of anxious expectation could have distinguished it. But that ear was alive to the slightest noise, and had he come with the lightness and silence of a fly, Caroline Dormer would have distinguished his footstep; her heart would have felt his approach.

Who is there that has ever waited for a beloved object—all anxiety—all expectation—that has not felt the increased acuteness of the sense of hearing; that has not experienced the painful sensation of misinterpreting every noise into the wished-for footstep, and the heart-sickening disappointment as the sound died away upon the ear, or as the proof of being mistaken has been unwillingly admitted.

In this state of suspense stood Caroline Dormer. Too anxious to sit patiently, she half leanded on a rustic seat in the front of the old fashioned summer-house, with her head bent forward in the act of listening, and trembling at every falling leaf, starting at every breeze that weaved the boughs, and at every bird that winged its way near her, scarcely daring to breathe lest her respiration should prevent her hearing the very first symptom of his approach. Many times had she already been disappointed; for, although Hartley was not five minutes after his time, Caroline seemed to have felt with Shakspeare, that "He that will divide a minute into a thousand parts, and break but a part of the thousandth part of a minute in the affair of love, it may be said of him, that Cupid hath clapp'd him o' the shoulder, but I warrant him heart-whole."

She now, however, palpably heard the noise he made in descending from the wall; cautiously as he trod, her anxious ear yet caught the sound of his footsteps on the grass, and her heart beat more tranquilly; and who has not felt that delightful tranquillity of soul, which the certainty of the coming of a beloved object inspires? Another instant, and they were together, gazing on each other by the light of the moon, their hands clasped, both feeling the pleasure of the meeting, yet both also feeling that they were about to part—meeting only to bid farewell, and that, for the first time since Frank Hartley had *told* Caroline Dormer he loved her, and since she had *felt* how much she loved him.

Caroline's father was a curate of one of the churches in the neighborhood of Oxford, and having been under great obligations to Hartley's father in early life, he had been engaged by him to superintend the reading of his son during his stay at college. But as Hartley, was only studious by fits and starts, his attendance in the good curate's study was rather irregular. Very much under the influence of his companions of the moment, Hartley was by turns a lounger on the pavé of the Highstreet, an ardent follower of the barriers on some wretched hackney, or with some book-worm friend an industrious student of the classics. With such a malleable character it is not to be wondered at that Mr. Dormer found him but an inattentive scholar. Latterly, however, he had been very constant in his application. Every leisure moment was spent at the curate's; his love for classic lore seemed suddenly to have prodigiously increased; and he now frequently took his tea and spent whole evenings with the worthy curate, to the old gentleman's great delight; nor did he, in the simplicity of his mind, observe that all this had occurred only since the arrival of his lovely daughter; or that he had invariably declined taking tea until he found it made by her, and the bread and butter handed by the soft white hand of Caroline The good old man rejoiced in the improvement and industry of his pupil which he attributed entirely to his own influence, and to the love he was gradually imbibing for the classics, and he wrote to his friend, Hartley's father, accordingly.

In the mean time Hartley was trying to read some sentiment corresponding with his own in Caroline's eyes, while the old gentleman construed Homer; and had much more inclination to explain some of the mysteries of Ovid to his daughter, than to attend to the explanations of some of the dry passages of Xenophon or Thucydides.

The young people, however, soon understood each other much better than the good old curate understood his pupil. The living language of the eyes, the language universally understood, of the heart, soon superseded all the dead languages to which he attempted to direct the attention of the student, and there wanted but the opportunity to bring about an *eclaircissement*.

The old gentleman's propensity to napping over his pipe after tea soon afforded this opportunity. A glance of the eye, a touch of the hand, a few sentences murmured in an under tone, expressed Hartley's sensations; while a blush, a sigh, a downcast look, and a tremor that thrilled and vibrated through her whole frame, proved that he had found a heart which sympathized with his own in the bosom of Caroline. Had Hartley been aware of the mischief he was doing, of the misery he was laying up for the poor girl, and could he have taken a complete view of the bearings of the whole case, of the inequality of their condition, of the impossibility of any happy and honorable conclusion of their loves, without the great displeasure of his parents, he would have paused; and the innate goodness of his heart would have taught him to deny himself the in-

dulgence of feelings, which, however delightful at the moment, could present no prospect but that of unhappiness.

Thoughtless, however, of the future, the present was all that struck his imagination. He saw before him a beautiful girl, in the first brilliancy of youth, with black eyes, raven tresses, and a complexion in which her eloquent blood spoke the feelings of her heart. He saw a finely rounded form, a heaving bosom, and a trembling hand; and he knew that the bosom heaved, the heart beat, and the hand trembled for him. It was not in human nature to resist this, at least in the human nature of twenty-two. It requires time, and experience, and disappointment, and the sight and feeling of misery, to lower the blood, and to quell the passions, and give reflection fair play, and when has this ever happened at twenty-two? How seldom at double that age! So Hartley went on and on, indulging his feelings, without permitting judgment or reason to give them the "*qui va la*" that might have stopped them in their progress.

In the first instance, Caroline, young as she was, had some thoughts of the difference of their rank, and of the inequality of their circumstances; and in the absence of her lover these thoughts would come on her with a sickening sensation that made her heart sink within her; and she determined to act differently, and not to be present at Hartley's visits. But he came, and she was still there; and as *he* never seemed to feel this difference, and as her own affection increased, she too forgot it, and gave herself up to all the dear delirium of a first love; a love as pure as could glow in the bosom of a virtuous girl of eighteen without any knowledge of the world, and as ardent as could be felt by a person who thought its object perfection, and who had certainly never seen anything superior to him for whom those feelings were excited.

Thus wrapped up in each other, neither of them had yet looked beyond the present moment. What they were to do had never entered the thoughts of either of them. If the future would intrude on the mind of Hartley, he banished the thought it suggested, as an unwelcome guest, by the enjoyment of the moment, an enjoyment as pure and innocent as that of Caroline herself; for no sentiment that could stain the purity of her honor, had ever entered his imagination. All they seemed determined to do was to love, (that was enough for the present,) and to leave the rest to time and circumstances.

Thus months rolled on; Caroline's heart became more and more absorbed in her feelings, and Hartley was as much devoted as ever, till the commands of his father that he should quit college, and pass a winter in London, and then travel preparatory to his entering on the course of public life for which he was intended, as the representative of an ancient and respectable house, and as one who might some day inherit the title to which his father was presumptive heir, and which was now borne by a widowed Lord who had resided abroad for many years.

This letter awoke them both from their dream of bliss. In Caroline's agony Hartley began to perceive some of the mischief of which he had inadvertently been guilty, and in his own anticipation of parting he also felt the future pangs he had laid up for his own heart. He now took his conduct severely to task, and questioned himself as to his intentions; but when he came to analyse his own mind he found that he had formed none. If there was no definite determination to make Caroline his wife, there was certainly not even the remotest thought of making her his mistress; and when, as he saw the difficulty of an honorable conclusion to his attachment in the elaborately detailed claim of his rank and family, set forth in his father's letter, this thought did pass across his mind like a cloud upon the purity of his passion; it was banished with horror, as his imagination pictured the grey hairs of the good old curate descending to the grave with sorrow and disgrace, and the now cheerful face of Caroline shrinking from the scornful finger of a pitiless world, as one of the cast-out of her sex.

Whether as wife or mistress, therefore, equal difficulties seemed to present themselves, and he still determined to go on as he had done, and leave things to time and circumstances, as heretofore.

He therefore encouraged Caroline with renewed assurances of his love, and with promises of unchangeable fidelity; and she buoyed herself up with the hope that, being the daughter of a gentleman, time would induce the consent of his parents to their union; many more unlikely things had happened, many more unequal matches were taking place every day, and why should not this be the case in her instance, as well as in that of others.

These ideas and hopes tranquillized her mind, and she thought of nothing but her love, and the pain of parting from her lover.

This was the first assignation they had ever made. The many opportunities which the habits of the good curate afforded them in his study, in the garden, and in the walks, had precluded the painful necessity of making absolute appointments, and the delicacy of Caroline's mind would instinctively have shrunk from such an idea. None of the usual opportunities, however, were sufficient for either of them at a parting like this. The pressure of the hand, warm as it was, the glance, all speaking of the feelings within, where nothing when given and exchanged in the presence of a third person. Both their hearts longed for something more, and it was agreed that Caroline should be in the summer-house at eleven, by which time her father and her old housekeeper, were generally asleep.

Those who have felt the pangs of separating from a beloved object, and know how much those pangs are assuaged by a free interchange of affectionate assurances; and those also who know the comfort which is derived during the absence from the recollection of such an interview, will readily find an apology for Caroline; and let those who are more rigid, recollect that she was only eighteen, in love for the first time, not as young ladies love generally, but with her whole soul; that she was going to part from the object of this love, and, above all that she had the most implicit confidence in her lover. Nor was her confidence misplaced: for, in asking this interview, Hartley's mind was as free from guile as her own in granting it.

When they met, she was pale and trembling, an innate sense of doing something that was not quite right, mingled with the pain of separation; this one

idea, however, soon absorbed every other, and her tears flowed fast as she recollected how long it might be ere they met again. Overcome by her sorrow, all caution on the part of Hartley gave way, and he poured forth his tale of tenderness in her ear, accompanied by such protestations of fidelity, and with so many insinuations that the indulgent love of his parents would overlook every obstacle to their union when they found how much his happiness depended upon it, that the poor believing girl was comforted, smiled through her tears at the prospect which his sanguine anticipations pictured, and mingled her vows with his own.

Who in the midst of such an interview has ever counted minutes? What lover ever thinks of the lapse of time? It was thus with Caroline and Hartley; they talked on and on, repeating the same thing over and over again without tiring of the eternal theme, till the first streaks of the morning surprised them. The lovers would scarcely believe their eyes as the dawning light stole through the leaves which clustered, even at this early period of the year, over the windows of the summer-house.

A hurried repetition of the method of their correspondence, a kiss half snatched half granted, a warm pressure of the hand, and Hartley leaped over the wall, while Caroline stole silently and sorrowfully to her apartment.

CHAPTER III.

QUITTING HOME.

It was on a beautiful morning in the spring of the same year, that Emily Hartley awoke from a thousand of those delicious dreams which render the state of the innocent even more delightful than its calm repose. Her wandering imagination had embodied all her waking thoughts; had gone back to the past, and combined the present with the future; picturing all the delightful anticipations which the young, innocent, and inexperienced indulge in the views they take of life, whether in their waking fancies or their sleeping dreams.

As her eyes gradually opened upon the bright and cheerful gleam which the sun shot into her apartment, she collected her scattered thoughts, recovered from the delicious illusion of her "golden dreams," and recollected that it was the morning on which she was to set off on her first visit to London. This was a circumstance which led to a thousand brilliant anticipations of gayety and splendor: of crowded drawing-rooms and fascinating assemblies; of gay society, and of all those varieties in pleasure with which the fashionable part of mankind contrive to kill that time, which during the progress of their lives they find too long, and, at its close, too short for them. The anticipation of this journey had given its coloring to her dreams; and highly indeed had they been tinted by her sleeping fancies. As she turned round, however, in her bed, and beheld all the objects of her beautiful little apartment: the white muslin window curtains, lined with rose-colored Persian; the painted blinds; the flowers cultivated by her own hand, and the pictures, the produce of her own talent and industry, and most of them portraits of those scenes in the neighborhood in which she had known the first enjoyments of her existence, and, unhappily for human nature, the first are generally the sweetest, a tender melancholy stole over her mind at the idea of quitting them.

Then came the thought of parting from her parents; from the father, whose lips had first taught her lessons of youthful wisdom; from the mother, whose tenderness had reared her in health and innocence, and from whose care she had never yet been absent even for a day; and then the old servants of the mansion house, most of whom had been there at the period of her birth, and had reckoned it a treat to be allowed by "nurse" to dandle Miss Emily in their arms, and present her with fruit and flowers.

Oppressed for a moment by these thoughts, and by one other, of which she was either unconscious or was ashamed to own it to herself, namely, the separation from one, whom of late she had been wont to look upon and feel for, with a tenderness surpassing that of friendship, she started from the bed, and throwing her dressing wrapper over her beautiful shoulders, and thrusting her lilliputian feet into her fur-lined silk slippers, she passed into her boudoir. Here was her private practising piano and guitar, neither of them objects likely to divert her mind from the scenes and circumstances she was quitting. She threw up the sash, and the mild spring air that rushed into the apartment revived her drooping spirits.

It was one of those mornings which at this time of the year come as harbingers of summer. So mild that the flowers opened their closed buds to its influence, and summer insects quit their winter embryo, only to find in the evening a blast which withers them for thus having been prematurely tempted into existence. The trees and shrubs displayed the beautiful bright green which is the characteristic of that early season of the year, which belongs to the poets from its freshness and youth, but from which the painter derives so little assistance. Her boudoir opened into a verandah overlooking her flower-garden. The earliest flowers were in blossom; and on every blade of grass, there hung bright drops of dew that sparkled like diamonds in the morning sun-beam. There was a cheerfulness of look, a healthiness of feeling, which imparted its influence to all around; and the birds sang lustily as they shook the morning dew from the different branches which they had chosen for their perch. Every thing without spoke of youth, health, and beauty; and as Emily put aside the jessamine that hung over the window of the boudoir, and gazed upon the morning, she looked, with her own youth, health, and loveliness, her bright blue eye and clear complexion, the fit inhabitant of the scene before her.

The birds themselves seemed to welcome her with a louder chorus, for there was not one of them that had not been her pensioner during the winter; and the opening of her window had been the signal of her morning's beneficence.

Her eye first rested on the flowers she had

planted, and which were now opening in their budding beauty to reward the pains she had bestowed upon them. This garden, connected with her own apartment, had been her sanctum sanctorum, her refuge from disagreeable and annoying visiters, the scene of her early studies, the place where she had first understood and enjoyed that poetry which had been hitherto the delight of her existence, and from which she had at present derived her only ideas of life. Over the little sweet brier hedge which divided this garden from the other part of the domain were seen the towering oaks and elms, the rich chestnuts, and vigorous sycamores of the park. Trees which had been on the estate for ages, and many of which were coeval with the first Hartley who had won an estate with his name. Through these in the blue distance were seen the Wye rolling its eddy waters in a serpentine line along the country; and beyond it, the distant mountains of Wales, in this early part of the morning, mingling with, and scarcely discernible from, the horizon

Emily gazed upon the scene with delight. She felt the inspiration it was calculated to impart. Her heart literally thrilled with the beauty she contemplated: she could have sung her joyfulness with the birds, and she forgot for a moment that she was about to quit these beauties, in the contemplation of which she had derived so much pleasure.

Suddenly her attention was attracted by the unusual movement of a thick cluster of shrubs, and she perceived for the first time that she was not alone in the contemplation of the scene before her. Half hidden by a large laurestinus stood Edward Forrester, whose image had mingled with her nightly dreams, and who had not been quite absent from her morning thoughts and regrets. The other beauties of the scene appeared to have no attraction for him; his eyes were riveted upon her with an earnest gaze, which softened into a melancholy smile as he perceived himself discovered. To kiss her hand with an affectionate nod, which bade him not begone, and to retreat from the window in confusion as she recollected her dishabille, was the operation of a moment; but ten minutes more saw her at the side of one who had been the earliest companion of her youth, out of her own family; and of the first person who had ever breathed in her ear the feelings created by sympathies warmer than those of friendship. They shook hands in silence; both knew they were going to part, and neither of them knew how to alleviate the pain which their separation created.

Emily spoke first for she felt the least; with her it was friendship ripening to a warmer feeling from the continued observation of an admirable and manly character entirely and exclusively devoted to herself; with him it was an ardent passion which formed the very principle of his existence. There was no anticipation of his future life in which her form was not interwoven as the principal object; no dread, no hope, no look for happiness, no fear of misery, that was unconnected with her; and yet he was not blinded to the risk he ran in thus confiding his happiness to the keeping of one so young and inexperienced. But he had done it; in forming her mind, for her intercourse with him had formed it more than almost any other circumstance in her life, he had, like Pygmalion, become enamored of his own work; but that work was any thing rather than a statue; and Edward Forrester's was a heart, that, admitting the passion of love once, felt it for ever.

"What a beautiful morning! how fresh and delightful every thing appears; the very plants and flowers seem to enjoy it," exclaimed Emily; "and how lovely this prospect appears!"

"And you are going to leave it; going to give up the vernal freshness of the spring for the smoky atmosphere of a city; this bright and boundless prospect, these beautiful flowers, for the circumscribed view and stunted vegetation of a London Square;" answered he, despondingly.

"Well, my dear friend, am I accountable for the caprice of that fashion which makes the winter season begin with the spring and end with the autumn? Is it my fault that a more enlarged knowledge of life than I can obtain here is considered necessary for me, or that the kindness of my friends will imagine pleasures for me in society, of the want of which I have been hitherto unconscious?" were the naïve questions of Emily, in reply to the almost reproachful tone in which Forrester had spoken.

"Forgive me, dear Miss Hartley." Emily shook her head. "Well then, Emily, since you have condescendingly allowed me to address you so familiarly, forgive me if I appear querulous at the idea of losing that which has been the principal pleasure of my existence."

"Of losing!" exclaimed Emily; "nay, we are only parting for a time. The next three months will pass rapidly away, and the summer and autumn will witness the renewal of our walks and readings."

"To you they may pass rapidly," replied Forrester, "because they will be marked by new pleasures, by new scenes; because they will be passed in a new world. To me they must hang heavily, as my hours will only be counted by my fears and my regrets." He paused, and painful thoughts seemed to oppress him. "And will you," resumed he, "after the more exciting pleasures of society and the metropolis, after the gayety, the flattery, that will surround you there, return with the same zest for the simple delights of study and the country?"

"With a greater, believe me," said Emily; "but if you are afraid of the evil influence of the scenes to which I am going, why not come with me? why not aid me with your experience, and guide my steps by your judgment, there as well as here? Why should not my Mentor of the country follow his pupil to town? why permit your Telemachus to tread the dangerous shores of the island of Calypso alone?" playfully asked Emily.

"No, no. I should be as much out of my element there, as yonder rugged pollard would be if placed in the midst of this beautiful flower-garden;" and a painful sense of his inferiority in the little *agrémens*, and in the manners of society, oppressed him; a pang rendered perhaps much greater by the consciousness of his real superiority in the more solid accomplishments of the understanding. For a moment he appeared buried in thought; then suddenly exclaiming, "But you *will* return

the same Emily that you leave me; the heartless world will have no power over the innocence of such a mind as yours; you will only learn to prize the tranquil pleasures of the country the more,-and I will learn only to rejoice in the pleasures which you will enjoy. Only promise me that amid the splendor and gayety of the scenes you are going to witness, amid the wit and accomplishments of the persons with whom you are about to associate, you will sometimes cast a thought upon me in my solitude, and I shall be happy."

"Oh believe me, many and many will be the hours devoted to such remembrances," said the artless girl, to whom hitherto her evening rambles and morning readings with Forrester had been the sources of her greatest pleasures; and with this assurance they sought the house, which was now in all the bustle of preparation.

In the breakfast-room they were met by Mr. and Lady Emily Hartley. The countenance of the latter betokened that anxiety which is the natural result of parting for the first time with a beloved child; for this was indeed the first time that Emily had ever quitted the paternal roof, and the immediate protection of her parents.

It had been originally intended that they should have accompanied her in her first excursion to London, and that an establishment should have been formed for the purpose of bringing out Emily, and of launching her brother, on his quitting college, into something like public life; but the lingering illness of a younger sister rendering the air of the metropolis dangerous, and requiring, in the eyes of Lady Emily, the tender cares of a mother, had determined them to defer the establishment for another year, while the pressing entreaties of a relative, whose Christmas had for many years been passed amid the festivities of Hartley Grove, had at length induced them to allow Emily to make her first appearance in the fashionable world under her auspices.

It was at this festive period of the year that the quiet of the domestic circle of the Hartleys was alone broken in upon by a round of fashionable visiters, who were happy thus annually to continue their acquaintance with Lady Emily Hartley, who had herself, up to the period of her marriage, and for a few years afterward, been one of the principal leaders in the fashionable world. Some melancholy circumstances, however, connected with the fate of an early and dear friend of her youth, had disgusted her for a moment with society, and she complied with the wish of her husband, whose domestic habits ill accorded with the gayeties of fashionable life, by retiring to his estate, of which, from the moment of her residence, she had been the presiding and beneficent genius .

Here Mr. Hartley had lived in the true English style of an English country gentleman, in the midst of, and looking after, the interests of his tenants. By this conduct he had at the same time attended to the truest interests of his own property, which had greatly increased under his superintendence.

Courted and respected by the whole county, the proprietor of Hartley Grove kept up his establishment in the style of old English hospitality; and at Christmas both the married and bachelor apartments of the mansion were filled for about three months by a succession of visiters, among whom might be reckoned some of the families the most distinguished for rank, fashion, and importance in the kingdom.

Lady Emily's connexions among the nobility were extensive, and though retired herself from the *business* of fashionable life, and fashionable life is no easy business, until her daughter was old enough to tempt her again within its vortex, she had not been sorry thus annually to refresh her early reminiscences by the company of those among whom she had once been the gayest of the gay.

One son and two daughters had blessed her union with Mr. Hartley, whom she had married more from her knowledge of the sterling worth of his character than for the brilliancy of his wit, the extent of his accomplishments, or the elegance of his person; and his conduct and affection from the period of their marriage had never for an instant caused her to regret a step by which she had crushed the hopes and disappointed the expectations of many candidates for her hand, who had despised his humble pretensions while he was their rival. Dr. Johnson has said that we become wise by the experience of others as well as by our own; and Lady Emily had profited by the experience of the early and dear friend before alluded to, and who had been won by the most accomplished man of the day, to the utter destruction of the happiness of her future life, which was one of bitter repentance from the period of her marriage to its melancholy termination.

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The carriage waited for Emily. There was yet a spot to be visited; some flowers or shrub to be once more gazed at and recommended to the gardener's especial care; another look at her boudoir, her piano, her harp, and books, the friends of her childhood, the companions of her solitude, the cheerers of her youthful melancholy (for youth, where there is sensibility, is not always exempt from its morbid influence,) was necessary to her heart. She again threw herself into the arms of her parents, and almost hesitated whether, after all, she could go or not; at length, blushing for her weakness, she summoned her resolution, and, entering the hall, passed through the line of servants who were waiting to receive the farewell of their beloved young mistress. Here was the old nurse of the family, who had been the first to receive her at her birth; she sobbed audibly as Emily kissed her wrinkled cheek, and recommended her birds to her especial attention. Every servant in turn received a kind farewell, or some commission to execute during her absence. The groom was recommended to exercise her favorite pony; her two spaniels Slap and Dash, the constant companions of her rides and walks, were placed under the superintendance of the game-keeper, with strict injunctions that they were not to be punished, even if they did now and then infringe a little on the "game laws," and hunt for themselves. Every one had his commission, and received it as a legacy, the evidence of the kindness of their young mistress.

Forrester presented his hand and placed her in the carriage, with a gentle pressure and a melancholy look which seemed to say, "Do not quite forget me;" and Lady Orville, to whose fashiona

ble notions all this scene was perfectly incomprehensible, shook her hand according to the most orthodox adieu, and impatiently desired the servant to proceed.

"Forward," was the word; smack went the whip, round went the wheels, and off flew the horses at the rate of twelve miles an hour. Emily had scarcely time to give one more glance at the group on the hall steps ere a turn in the road shut the house altogether from her sight.

Her parents, with Forrester, still lingered in the portico; their eyes fixed on the tracks of the wheels which had borne away one so dear to them; at length they returned to the library, and the household resumed their accustomed avocations; yet there was that melancholy listlessness, that inattention to common pursuits, that vacancy of heart which always characterizes the separation from a beloved object.

CHAPTER IV.

RETROSPECTIVE.

In life retrospection is seldom of service, unless it is to call into action that experience which the past may have been given us to guide us in some future event. To those to whom life has been unfortunate, retrospection is melancholy, as only serving to renew our sufferings by a recollection of them: and to those who have passed a life of pleasure, it but too often brings regret that those pleasures are passed, of which age creeping upon the strength of our youth, is quickly rendering a recurrence impossible. But in a novel, retrospection is absolutely necessary.

To create an interest in their fate, an author is obliged to plunge his readers at once into the midst of those personages with whom he is to travel through his work; and it becomes necessary for him afterwards to give a slight glance at their families and connexions, to show that he has not been introduced to improper characters.

Having, therefore, like a careful guardian, launched some of our young people fairly into the world, we must leave Lascelles to work his mail coach; Frank Hartley to his solitary dreams of Caroline Dormer, in his post-chaise; and Emily to her bright anticipations in Lady Orville's carriage; all rolling towards that great mart of commerce and activity, of wisdom and folly, of learning and ignorance, and of virtue and iniquity—London—while we take a cursory glance at Hartley Grove and the good family who dwell in it.

Mr. Hartley was one of those country gentlemen who are an honour and an ornament, and what is perhaps better, of infinite utility to England, and of whom, alas! in later days we have had but few. He lived on his estate, and his utmost ambition was gratified by its improvement, and by the good he could do to his tenantry, who were not only numerous but respectable; metropolitan extravance had not compelled their landlord to raise his rents beyond their means of payment; the Grove itself consumed a great portion of their produce; rents were paid, in many instances, in kind; and Mr. Hartley's ten thousand a year was not merely nominal, since the tenants, feeling the benefit of living under such a landlord, were as solicitous for the payment of their rent as on many other estates they were anxious to avoid and to postpone it. Mr. Hartley himself looked after his tenants; he did not trust to any mercenary steward, but was generally present on the quarter day, inquired into their means, and their welfare; and remitted the payment, or diminished it, where crops had fallen short, or where sickness or misfortune had rendered raising the rent money a difficulty.

By living greatly within his real income, instead of keeping an establishment greatly beyond his nominal one, he was not only an unencumbered landed proprietor, a rare thing in these days, but a man of considerable funded property, and one who had been of infinite assistance to several of the neighbouring proprietors in the county, to the great annoyance of mercenary stewards, and of pettifogging agents, who would otherwise have made their market of them, and to whom they would have been an easy prey.

By this means, Mr. Hartley, of Hartley Grove, was beloved by the rich as well as the poor. As he was no public man, there was no political rivalry to create him enemies among the men; and as Lady Emily's drawing-room was open to every body in the country whose character was fair, and never displayed pretensions, even equal to her rank, she was a general favorite among the ladies, so that the only wonder was, that, with her husband's income, her own accomplishments, and her immense connexions in the great world, she was content to vegetate in the country, instead of figuring away, as she might have done, as one of the distinguished leaders of the ton during the London season.

Lady Emily had herself been educated at a fashionable boarding school, had gone through the modish regulation of coming out, being presented, and had passed the routine of several London seasons. During this period she had made up her mind as to the evil tendency of such a method of education; she had seen the heart sehooled into heartlessness; she had seen form take the place of feeling; tournure more the object both of pupil and mistress than the mind or morals; and the dancing-master and the lady's maid of more consequence than all the other instructors who were employed upon the establishment. She had seen all this, and she had determined never to subject her own daughters to the dangers of a dashing establishment of the same kind.

At this school, too, she had formed a friendship which had, in some measure given a color to the whole of her future life; and in the early and unfortunate fate of her beloved Agnes she had learned a deep and ineffaceable lesson, from which she she was determined to profit in the education and establishment of her own daughter. Lady Emily's affection for this early friend had been strengthened by its object having first married her own brother, and thus added the ties of relationship to those of friendship.

The marriage had been rendered unhappy by the conduct of Lady Emily's brother, and was at

length dissolved by his violent death in a duel, the result of some gambling transaction. During the continuance of this connexion the various accomplishments and character of Agnes had inspired the bosom of Lord Arlington, a first cousin of Mr. Hartley, with a passion so ardent, that, forgetting all his vows against marriage, and all the satires against the sex which a too successful life of libertinism had induced him to indulge, he proposed himself as her second husband; and she, too apt to believe in his expressions of repentance for his former life, too good herself to imagine depravity so deeply-seated, and led away by the extraordinary accomplishments and great power of pleasing exhibited by Lord Arlington, consented to be led a second time to the altar, in spite of several mysterious warnings which would have prevented this sacrifice of one of the loveliest as well as one of the most amiable of human beings.

Lady Emily married Mr. Hartley on the same day that her friend Agnes united her fate with that of his cousin, Lord Arlington; and for two seasons the friends were at the head of every thing that was gay and fashionable in town; and what was far better, these fashionable pursuits did not mar their domestic happiness. During this period Agnes had given birth to a daughter, and she was revelling in all the delights of a young mother, when a discovery took place that, by proving the father of her child to be a villain, blighted all her happiness in the bud. A lady, an Italian by birth, arrived in London, and set up a public and prior claim to Lord Arlington as her husband, by a previous marriage on the continent. Her claim was but too well founded. Agnes was in her own eyes a disgraced woman, and her child blasted with the stain of illegitimacy.

Shrinking from the world, as though she were herself the criminal instead of the victim, as though she were the guilty cause instead of the innocent sufferer, she fled with her child, without even communicating to her earliest friend the place of her retreat. Her libertine husband also quitted a country where not all his rank and influence could have saved him from the effects of its offended laws, or from the execrations of those who pitied his victim and abhorred her destroyer.

Lady Emily, overcome by the fate of her friend, imbibed a distaste for the scenes of their mutual enjoyment, and retired with her husband from the great world to Hartley House, where they had lived happy, blessed and respected for a period of twenty years, during which time she had never ceased to lament the fate of her early friend, to whose memory she gave a sigh even in the midst of her own most exquisite enjoyment, as a mother.

During this period no certain tidings had ever been heard of the absent Agnes; and Lord Arlington was only known to be alive through the medium of his banker and confidential agent, who had never communicated, even if he knew it, the name under which he travelled.

Rumors had brought intelligence of a duel in some obscure corner of Italy, the result of some other flagrant breach of moral principle, and these rumors were coupled with accounts of the deaths both of Agnes and Lord Arlington. But nothing further was known excepting the falsehood of the report of Lord Arlington's death. He was still living, though where was only known to his agent, by whom the greater part of his princely income was paid in to bankers in different parts of the Continent, so as to meet his exigencies whenever and wherever he might require his funds.

Mr. Hartley, though but a distant one, was yet his nearest relative, and being lineally connected with Lord Arlington, and of course presumptive heir to his title and estate, the agent thought it necessary to give him periodical intelligence of the existence of that nobleman: excepting upon these occasions the name of Arlington was never mentioned. It was coupled with too many painful recollections in the mind of Lady Emily, who dreaded the necessity of one day being obliged to assume the title by which her early friend had been so signally disgraced. Many and anxious had been her attempts, for the first few years of her absence, to discover the retreat of Agnes, and to ascertain the fate of her child; but year after year rolling on without any intelligence, she had gradually admitted the idea that they were both no more, and her inquiries ceased.

At the period at which our history commences, Hartley and Lady Emily had begun to feel the necessity of once more entering the world for the sake of their children. Their son had been of age nearly two years, and as we have seen was on the point of leaving college; and the fashionable friends, who formed their Christmas circle at the Grove, had at length persuaded Lady Emily to give her daughter the advantage of a winter in London; and willing to defer, yet a little longer, appearing again at the head of a London establishment, she had entrusted Emily, as we have also seen, to the care of her cousin Lady Orville, the widow of the Earl of Orville, and one of the foremost in the ranks of fashion. Had Lady Emily seen this lady in town, instead of merely during her periodical visits to Hartley Grove, she had paused before she had confided so sacred a trust to her charge; but Lady Orville was one of those women who could mould herself to please every body, and adapt herself to any society in which she happened to be placed. She had therefore appeared to Lady Emily Hartley just the kind of person with whom, in the absence of her mother, Emily might be entrusted.

Could Lady Emily have guessed that Orville House was the most dissipated in town; that, in addition to the banquetings and quadrilles, there was play to a considerable extent; and that where there was any great object to be obtained, the hostess's eyes were conveniently shut to any little blemishes of character in her numerous guests, she would have trembled for her daughter, or rather, she would never have permitted the visit which was now taking place with her free sanction.

Lady Emily's knowledge, however, of Lady Orville was confined to the commencement of her life; before a course of dissipation and extravagance, and, if report said true, something worse than either, had deteriorated the heart which Lady Emily had recollected to have been distinguished as much by its generosity as by its gayety. She had known her before the developement of those passions which had turned a gay and giddy girl into a dissipated, violent, and artful woman; and had her subsequent knowledge of her been in London instead of the country, she would never

have recognised her early and intimate friend, Cecelia Neville, in the dashing, dissipated, and profligate Countess of Orville.

CHAPTER V.

COMING OUT.

Well, our young Oxonians, together with one of our heroines, were thus launched into the great world. To those who are for the first time out of the leading strings of tutors and governesses, who have looked forward to this liberty as the acme and climax of delight; who have for years lived on the anticipation of the moment which was to enfranchise them from the trammels of scholastic discipline, and to open the great panorama of life to their view, the sensations of our new comers may easily be imagined. The change from the tranquillity of Hartley Grove, and from the dullness of Oxford, to the full meridian of the world, was equally electrical. The contrast between the study at the one and the seclusion of the other, and the routs, balls, dinners, operas, and plays, which succeeded each other with incredible rapidity, was equally striking; and was alike felt by Emily, her brother, and Lascelles.

They arrived, too, precisely at that part of the year, in which the season of London is at its meridian, in which all the world seems running and rioting in a career of dissipation and extravagance; when the head is dizzied by the rapid whirl of the thousand vehicles which dart through the streets, bearing their owners on their various pursuits by day; and bewildered by the rapid and repeated reverberations of a chorus of knockers by night: when hall tables are crowded by pasteboard challenges to dinners and quadrilles, as though there were nothing in the world to do but to dance and to dine, and nothing in life to attend to but amusement and pleasure.

The birth and fortunes both of Hartley and Lascelles at once commanded admission into the upper classes of society. Their families were too well known to require any farther introduction for them, than being the scions of the parent stock. Every door was open to them, and invitations poured in from all quarters. Indeed, had not their rank ensured them these privileges, seven thousand a-year in possession would have secured Lascelles a welcome reception; and fifteen thousand per annum in expectancy would have made Hartley a very desirable addition to any family, however noble in birth or aristocratic in notions; for it is astonishing how all the pride of pedigree will melt under the golden influence of three per cent. consols, or of a rent roll.

Hartley was well pleased enough with the attention he received, and with the numerous invitations to which it gave rise: but, independently of the pre-occupation of his heart by a passion which he tried to persuade himself was to be eternal, he passed the battery of sighs, glances, and even gentle pressures of the hand, unscathed and untouched; though at the same time he indulged in all the vanity which is gratified by those little secret intelligences which were permitted to exist between him and some half dozen young ladies who ranked among the reigning belles of the moment.

Hartley possessed a great store of animal spirits, and the desultory fits of study by which he had sometimes been seized, added to a very retentive memory and a strong imagination, gave him so much facility of conversation, that, though he did not rank among the wits of the day, he was soon pronounced a clever agreeable man, and was very seldom considered *de trop*, even by those who were hopeless of any thing from him beyond the entertainment of the moment.

But Lascelles was quite a different person. He was no ladies' man. All topics that did not emanate from a love of those favorite pursuits which he was pleased to call manly ennuyéd him to death. At dinner he would gape over a political or literary discussion: pronounced quadrilles to be infernal; and the necessity of doing the agreeable a d——d bore. He soon therefore detached himself from the circle from which he could not entice Hartley; and, surrounded by the fancy, who elected him their patron, or by "gentlemen" of the turf, who allowed him to be their dupe; he was oftener heard of at Tattersal's and the One Tun, making up his books for the Derby, and the St. Leger, or forming a match between the Chicken and Gas man; than in the midst of that élite of society, to which he had the privilege of admittance.

CHAPTER VI.

F. HARTLEY TO CHARLES STRICTLAND.

Well, my dear Strictland, here I am, in the very midst of the gay world, and though not the "gayest of the gay," I am quite enough so to laugh at all the moral lectures you used to read me of the insufficiency of the world, of the pleasures of retirement, and the delights of study.—Upon my soul, my dear fellow, you had better leave your musty books, and the worm-eaten wainscot of your rooms at Oxford, and come and spend a few months with me in the shades of my curtain; "couleur de rose," in Cavendish Square. I could get a hundred fair damsels to take pity upon you, and to polish off the rust of the college, and to transform you from a book-worm into a man "comme il faut." But I know it is in vain to ask you; you prefer the classics to a quadrille; the disciples of the Stoa to the guests of the dining room; and the lumbering lore of the ancients to the light literature of the moderns.

But what, in the name of wonder, can make philosophers rail so against the world. It certainly is a beautiful world, and contains every delight that man is capable of enjoying; and it must be a good world, for here am I, a perfect stranger, received by a hundred families I never saw before, upon the footing of an old friend. t must be a hos-

pitable world, for my table is so crowded with invitations, that could I cut myself into a hundred pieces, I should find a dinner and a dance for every individual atom into which I should divide myself. Wherever I go I am welcomed by hearty shakes of the hand; wherever I turn, I am met by smiles and looks of approbation. The conversation, which you used to designate as frivolous, here passes for wit; and I never attempt a sally that does not meet with the approbation of a dozen pair of bright eyes, which give me so much encouragement, that in spite of your predictions to the contrary, I really begin to think myself a prodigiously clever fellow. That others think me so, I am rather inclined to believe; for I had not been in town a night before I was initiated into the suppers at C——s; or a week, before I was elected a member of the Cocoa-tree and Arthur's. The first opera night, two young lords kept their carriages at full gallop, and carried up the mystic number, to make me a member at White's. I had the entrée of M—— House, without undergoing the usual probation; and vouchers were sent to me for Almacks, without the preliminary of entreaty. At all this your gravity will laugh; but what do you say to a political employé, asking my opinion upon the balance of power in Europe; a young clergyman consulting me upon a knotty point in theology; and a celebrated author requesting my criticism upon a passage in his new work. It is true, that the politician thought I was to sit for my father's vacant borough. The parson asked me how old the present incumbent of Hartley vicarage might be; and the author finished by putting my name down as a subscriber for ten copies of his work. But this you know was all in the way of their various métiers, and could have no influence on their motives; though I did feel rather qualmish about it at the time.

Then my apartment is crowded in the morning with artists and authors, with professors and amateurs, all looking eagerly up to my opinion, requesting my recommendation, and soliciting my patronage.

Oh, it certainly is a delightful world; and the women, Strictland, the women—take your eyes off that passage of Thucydides, Strictland, and attend to what I have to say about the women! At Oxford we knew scarcely any, excepting the pastry cook's daughter, and our bed makers: queer specimens of the fair sex, to be sure, yet the only ones that we Oxonians generally know, until we make our entrance into the great world. To be sure there was *one*, but then you don't know her; so no matter. The women here are certainly delightful; the old ones all chatter and kindness; the young ones all artlessness and gayety: no formality to repress one; no demureness to freeze one into ice; but open as the day, free as the air, and lovely as—but comparisons are said to be odious, and I can really find none that is not so in comparison with women. Then their beauty, as varied as it is alluring. Brunettes and blondes, jetty and auburn; black eyes and blue eyes, with a plentiful sprinkle of the true hazle; with forms, from incipient womanhood up to the stately matron, all equally beautiful of their kind.

Mahomet must have paid a visit to England, and there imagined his Paradise; for I do not think there is any country under the sun which can make such a display of beauty as that which forms the present galaxy of female attraction in London. Then their air, their manners; their, what the French call, "*tournure*," is absolutely indescribable; then they are so kind, listen to what one says with such att ntion, laugh at one's *bon-mots*, (which you never would do,) sing and dance when they are asked, lean their lovely forms upon your arm when they are fatigued, sip their ices with such grace. Oh, Strictland, Strictland! what do you not lose by being moped up in a college all your life; it is a beautiful world, and I will maintain it against all the dogmas of the most dogmatical cynic that ever lived in a tub, or scribbled philosophy.

As to my present life, imagine one scene of perpetual pleasure and gayety, with just enough repose to prepare me for its enjoyment and to rest me from its fatigues, and you have its history. But you will blame all this; you will call that folly which I call delight; but yet I will maintain that it is a beautiful world.

The family in which I am most intimate is that of the Countess of Orville, who has the charge of bringing out my sister. You remember Orville her son; he quitted Christchurch just a year after our arrival, on his accession to the earldom by the death of his father. He was there, if you recollect, denominated the fine gentleman; a character which he has preserved in the world, as he is looked up to by hundreds of imitators who dress after his model and follow his fashions, revolving around him as their orbit, and like his satellites, borrowing all the lustre of which they can boast from his reflection, He is not only a fine gentleman but a good fellow; we are very intimate, and he promised to initiate me into all the best things in town. Indeed it is, I believe, to his influence that I may mainly attribute my easy entrance into the clubs. Lady Orville herself is a perfect woman of fashion, and I suspect of the world; very kind and patronising to me, and her good word goes a great way in society. In short, the whole world seems to vie who shall make themselves most agreeable to me; and I again say it is a most beautiful world and you shall not gainsay it.

At Orville House I met with many of our old Oxonians, and among the rest Langley, whom you must recollect, varying his pursuits with every man of the day; here he is the life of every party, and preserving his usual flow of spirits in spite of the late decree by which he has been deprived of so great a portion of his fortune. He, with a hundred other pleasant fellows, makes time pass merily; and then they have all such good hearts that I find myself daily increasing the number of friends, though never to the exclusion of you, my dear fellow. By-the-by, you will soon be a Fellow in reality; so adieu. Write me a dull line from your dull college, and believe me, sincerely yours,

FRANK HARTLEY.

To this vivid epistle a few posts brought the following reply:

"Were I, my dear Hartley, to enter life the heir of fifteen thousand a year, with an earldom in expectancy, I dare say I should find every thing "*Couleur de Rose*," as you do. As this, however, is not the case, I must content myself with dream-

ing of lawn sleeves, pushing my nightcap into the shape of a mitre in my sleep, and devoting myself to divinity, but shall always remain your attached friend.

CHARLES STRICTLAND."

As Hartley read this laconic epistle, which seemed to cast a doubt upon the motives of the attentions he received, and the pleasures which were procured for him, he crumbled it in his hand with a momentary start of anger, and exclaiming, "A very Diogenes!" threw it into the fire.

Before, however, it was consumed, both the anger, and the momentary reflection which it had excited had vanished; and Orville being announced, away they went in their daily pursuits, and Strictland with his strictures were forgotten.

CHAPTER VII.

A ROUT.

"SIR HARRY WINSLOW'S carriage stops the way."

"Lady Winslow coming down."

"The Marchioness of Tourville's carriage."

"Lady Harriet Buckley's carriage."

"The Marchioness of Tourville coming down."

"Lady Harriet Buckley coming down"—were the sounds that thundered through the spacious hall and splendid staircase of one of the aristocratic mansions of Cavendish-square; while guest after guest, elegantly attired, the females sparkling with gold and jewels, and enveloped in shawls of Cashmere and cloaks of ermine, glided through a long lane of liveried lackeys to their carriages, without casting a thought upon the crowd of houseless wretches who pressed round the door with a curiosity to see these better-fated mortals, which even poverty, starvation, and coldness could not repress.

Cabriolets and a few remaining carriages made their way up to the door, and were one by one entered by these late loungers. "Who is for C——d's? His supper will scarcely be over yet, and the crowd here was so cursed hungry that I could not impound a sandwich. Langley, will you go?" addressing the wit at whose sally they had just laughed so immoderately.

"No, thank ye."

"Can I set you down, Langley?"

"No, thank ye;" and had the light of the lamp then glanced on Langley's face, it would have shown a transient blush, as his memory reverted to the home at which the speaker wished to set him down.

"Well, Langley, you were in high feather today, upon honor. Don't forget you dine with me at seven to-morrow," said one, as he drove off.

"Don't forget me for Thursday at eight," said another, and off darted his spirited horse,

"Nor my dinner, Langley, on Friday," cried a third, as he drew up the glasses of his chariot.

"And mind," said Lascelles, whom the great assembly at Orville House had attracted from his set, "mind you remember my feed on Sunday, where we expect you will come in your best spirits, for we shall have some jolly dogs, and there are no d——d parties to interrupt a jovial evening;" and away drove the different inviters in their different vehicles to their various destinations of clubs, mistresses, and h—lls, leaving only some half-dozen carriages, belonging to those whose ecarte tables were not yet broken up, or whose flirtations remained unfinished. The forced smile passed away from Langley's face; the last laugh which he gave to his departing companions almost assumed the sound of a convulsive sob; external excitation was past, and his mind turned to its own interior and bitter reflections, as he wended his way on foot through the spacious squares to an humble street that I should be ashamed to name as the residence of any one who was occasionally, nay, continually, admitted, if not courted, in so many circles of the first fashion; yet in this street lived Langley. A small key of one of Bramah's patent locks, procured him entrance to the humble house which formed his home; and in that house was a listening ear and a beating heart, that anxiously waited his return, and to whom the sound of the key that admitted him was sweeter than the most celebrated air of the most celebrated composer.

"He is here!" said she, and her heart became tranquil. "He is returned!" and her anxiety ceased, her flurried pulse beat evenly. Before he could reach the second floor, for Langley could afford to lodge no lower, the door was open to receive him, a finger on the lips, and a sagacious look towards the cradle told him that their child slept, and warned him to silence.

A pang shot across his heart as Langley contemplated the humble scene before him, and contrasted it with the splendor which he had just quitted; and something like a feeling of shame came across him as he thought how different had been the occupation of himself and those of his wife (for it was his wife, reader) on that evening. His hours had been passed in fashionable society, in the enjoyment of luxuries to which his fortune no longer entitled him, in the midst of gaieties to which his own wit had given the principle zest. Hers, in the performance of the humblest of her domestic duties, in nursing their child, in reflecting upon the fallen fortunes of her husband, and in thinking upon him in his absence.

These thoughts wrung an involuntary sigh from his bosom; but a confiding and affectionate kiss, a smile of welcome, such as nothing but the affection of a woman, of a wife, can give, and the blush of pleasure that mantled in her cheek at his return, tranquillized his feelings.

Langley, in the plenitude of prosperity, had been at Oxford, and it was at college, that first meeting with Lord Orville, their friendship had continued, if that kind of intercourse which consists in associations and visiting may be called friendship.

All the world had known Langley as the expectant heir of a princely fortune, and had participated in the elegances and splendor of his hospitable mansion. All the world knew of the wreck of his hopes, of the blight of his early prospects, of his

present poverty; but *how* poor he was, no one knew. He still kept up his subscription to his club, where all letters were addressed to him; and his humble home was therefore a secret, as well as his marriage. He was still not only tolerated in the society in which he had been born, but courted for the wit with which he could entertain, and of which his fallen fortunes had not deprived him. His friends were, in outward appearance, still the same, but he had not tried them. He was known to be poor, but he had never yet had recourse to the purses of his more fortunate companions; his poverty had never yet rendered him troublesome to his friends, and their friendship, therefore, appeared to be undiminished.

Langley's was a melancholy, and, I fear, not an uncommon story. From infancy he was nursed in the lap of luxury, the pet of a doting mother, the pride of an affectionate father; his natural talents had been cultivated by the best education which the country could afford; his boyhood was spent at Eton, the commencement of his manhood was passed at Oxford. Possessed of unbounded wealth, his father made him so liberal an allowance that his purse was always at the service of his companions, and Langley was voted the best fellow in the world. His wit and conversational talents rendered his society an acquisition, and his company was accordingly courted by young men of the highest rank, till no college-feast was the thing unless Langley was one of the party.

During a shooting excursion, the first year after his departure from Oxford, accident introduced him to Miss Fanny Palmer, the daughter of a man with whom his father had quarelled early in life. A mutual attachment was the consequence of their meeting. During this period, the failure of some great Indian establishment ruined Mr. Palmer, whose constitution sunk under the shock, and he died, leaving his daughter Fanny pennyless and friendless, with no hope of protection, excepting from a paternal uncle, who was in India, and who had never forgiven his sister for connecting herself with a man engaged in commerce.

The friendless situation of Fanny only served to increase the passion of Langley; and he generously though imprudently determined to rescue her from her present friendless position by making her his wife. Unhappily he determined upon this step without the consent of his father. Unprotected and unadvised, she consented to a private marriage, and became the wife of the man whom her heart preferred beyond all others.

The generous allowance of Langley's father prevented all difficulties of supplying his wife's very moderate desires. Her only want was his society, of which, situated as they were, she could of course, enjoy very little; and it was this, more than any other advantage which she might derive from its disclosure, that made her urge the publication of their marriage, now rendered more necessary by the certainty of her speedy confinement. His mother's death had prevented Langley's making this disclosure so soon as he had at first intended.

Determined at length at all events to unfold the truth, he was diligently looking out for a favorable opportunity, when his father was seized with apoplexy, and, after lingering a few days, expired without recovering his senses, or giving any signs of recognition.

On the death of the old gentleman, every body treated Langley as the heir to his wealth, while diligent search was made among his papers for a will. When the fact of his having died intestate became known, the steward, who had acted as general agent for the late Mr. Langley, to the surprise of every body, put his seal upon the different papers, and peremptorily ordered that nothing should be disturbed till the heir, or his legitimate agent, should inspect them. Langley was himself too much absorbed in the event, to know of this till the funeral was over; when Mr. Turner, whom he could never bear, from the cringing hypocrisy with which he had always treated his father, demanded an interview. On Langley's declining to see him, Turner insisted, and at length almost forcing himself into the library, he stood before his young master, without any of that cringing servility which had always hitherto distinguished him in his intercourse with his old master and his son.

Langley, surprised at the unwelcome intrusion, demanded the reason for his thus insisting upon an interview.

"I wish to know, sir," replied Turner, "whether you are aware of any will left by the late Mr. Langley."

"You, I understand, Turner, have searched all my father's papers, and have found none," replied Langley.

"I am sorry for it," said Turner, while a malicious glance interpreted his pretended sorrow into triumph; "for I much fear you will have little to expect from his heir at law."

"Heir at law! Why the man is mad," exclaimed Langley; and, for the moment, he thought as he said.

"Not so mad as you imagine, sir; but pray sit down, and tranquillize yourself; all may yet be well, if you will act wisely," said Turner, as he drew a chair familiarly, and seated himself, "and if you will follow my advice—"

"When it is requisite, sir, it will be sought," said Langley, who still continued standing; "at present, I have no need of it, and would be left to myself."

"More need of it, Mr. George, than you may imagine," continued the wily steward, in the same familiar tone.

"Once for all, Turner, I am in no mood for business now, and you must be either drunk or mad to force it upon me at this moment," reiterated Langley.

"I am neither drunk nor mad, Mr. George; but, in spite of the galling pride with which you have ever treated me, am come now to offer to do you a service; to save you from a perilous position."

"What do you mean? What peril can threaten me?"

"Your father's relations—"

Langley interrupted him. "Do not imagine, Mr. Turner, that I have forgotten them. One of my first duties will be, and in that, it is true you may assist me; to seek them out, and make such provision for them out of my father's wealth, as he himself would have done, had he not have been cut off so suddenly."

"Think of yourself, Mr. George, rather than of them," said Turner; "it is time enough to think of them when you are yourself secure."

"Secure!"

"Aye, Mr. George, secure; and know that your security depends upon me;" and this Turner repeated twice, with a sinister expression of countenance, which denoted the delight he anticipated in the effect of the intelligence he was about to communicate.

"My security depend upon you! upon you! Mr. Turner. I do not understand you; you bewilder me. Pray explain yourself more clearly; and if you have any thing of importance to communicate, let it be presently done," said Langley, with as much temper as the insolent air of the other would allow him to command.

"Not so fast, Mr. George, not so fast; first sign these two papers, and I am silenced for ever, and the secret shall remain buried in my own breast."

"What secret!" asked Langley, as he mechanically cast his eyes over the two papers; the one of which was a full ratification of Turner's accounts up to that period; and the other a bond for ten thousand pounds.

"A secret which involves your future fate," said Turner.

By this time Langley had perused the two papers, and turning calmly round to the steward, who was still seated, he quietly said, "Mr. Turner, the first of these papers only serves to confirm me in what you know I have long suspected; namely, that you have not been the honest agent to my father which he supposed you to be; for the second, I am at a loss to know the grounds on which you can make so inordinate a demand.—Be silent for a few moments: and now, Mr. Turner, once for all, since you have forced me into business, for which I am yet unfit, as well as unprepared, I request you will make up your accounts without delay, that I may judge from them whether my suspicions are correct; and that I may do you justice, if they should prove erroneous."

"Mr. George, Mr. George, don't provoke me; you know not what you do. I am in possession of a secret, upon which your whole welfare depends; and, by signing these papers, you will bury the secret for ever in my breast," said the steward.

"What is your secret?" firmly asked Langley; "what is your secret?"

The steward looked cautiously round; opened the door, to see that no one was listening, aud then closing it carefully, and approaching Langley, he said, in a hoarse loud whisper, "You are an illegitimate child; you have no claim to your father's fortune; the lineal heir is a pettifogging attorney; and a word from me puts him into possession of this mansion and your father's estates and sends you forth a houseless and a pennyless beggar."

The first sentence of this tirade came like a thunderholt upon Langley; he heard no other part of the steward's speech; all his faculties seemed absorbed in the one great affront which its commencement put upon himself and his parents. Its consequences never occurred to him.

"Villain!" he exclaimed; and with his right hand he seized the steward by the throat; "'Tis a lie . an infernal lie! Oh, mother! Oh, mother! and am I doomed to bear your loved name traduced, and by the viper which my father nourished into existence. Villain, unsay your words, or by heavens"—here his feelings overcame him, his hand relaxed its hold, and the trembling steward, escaping from his grasp, hurried out of the room, muttering something, in which "madman" and "bastard" were the only words that struck upon his ear.

Langley's faculties were stunned; he remembered some history .of his father having eloped with his mother, and of their having been subsequently forgiven. Could it be possible? had the steward spoken truth? he would not, could not, believe it.

In case he should have died before his father, he had effected an insurance on his life in favor of his wife; and to do this he remembered having obtained a certificate of his birth. That of his father's marriage had been discovered in the general search after the will. He hastened to the drawer which contained these papers, compared their dates, and to his horror discovered that the certificate of the marriage was dated one month later than that of his birth.

This was, indeed, a confirmation of the truth of the steward's assertion. Nor was he long before he felt the activity of this man's revenge. A few days brought him accompanied by the heir at law. The facts were too stubborn, even for the lawyers to advise his contesting the claim which was set up to his father's estate; but this his respect for the name of his mother would have prevented, unless it was certain of clearing her fame from the attainder. There was no proof to be obtained of any previous marriage; although some old nurse said that she thought a secret union must have taken place. Advertisement after advertisement was inserted, offering large rewards for any information that could elucidate the mystery, without producing any effect. In the mean time, the heir at law, aided by the steward, took such effectual measures to make good his claim, that he was soon in possession of all that wealth to which Langley thought himself the legitimate heir; and he found himself the master only of a small pittance, which his mother had left him as a last instance of her affection; little thinking of the immense consequence this trifle was to become to her beloved son. The heir at law entered upon the enjoyment of his immense fortune without casting a thought upon the unfortunate Langley; or, if he did think of him, it was only with that vulgar triumph which a low mind enjoys over its superior in intellect and acquirements. One thing he did, which, while it displayed his own meanness, did poetical justice on the steward. With his knowledge of attorneyship, we will not call it law, he had contrived by some quibble to invalidate the bond for ten thousand pounds; and leaving Turner his ill-gotten gains, dismissed him from his service without the promised reward.

Langley lost the severity of his disappointment in the bosom of his wife, who bore it with a fortitude which nothing but affection can bestow. Her husband was all to her, and though mortified at the necessity for the concealment of their marriage, which Langley still urged, until he had obtained some employment that would enable them to ap-

pear with respectability, she acquiesced without a murmur.

However modestly or meritoriously he may have used prosperity, the man who suddenly meets a reverse is sure to find many who rejoice in his fall; why, we will not pretend to say, perhaps it is human nature, and we are sorry for it.

Langley was, however, so much liked that he was generally pitied; and his fate was the more lamented, as it was well known that the man who had come into possession of his fortune, was one not at all likely to give the dinners, and keep the hospitable house that Langley would have done. This was therefore a fortune lost to the eating public, or dinners-out at large, to be centered in one individual.

If words and professions could give consolation, Langley would have been amply consoled. Having a buoyant spirit, however, it rose above misfortune: he had talents, and he determined to employ them; a large and powerful connexion, and he resolved to avail himself of it. Alas! how little did he think that those, so profuse of their offers of service when he did not want it, would be among the first to refuse their assistance now that he required it. Both himself and his wife felt the necessity for his keeping up his standing in the society in which he had been used to move; as this seemed to be the only chance of getting, through the influence of friends, an appointment of some sort or other; for the education afforded by Eaton and Oxford had rather unfitted, than fitted him, for the real business of life.

CHAPTER VIII.

A WIFE.

Langley's loss of fortune would have thrown any other man, perhaps, out of the pale of that society in which we have found him; since it had been his wealth and not his rank that had given him pretensions to it. Langley, however, was generally liked; and he possessed a buoyancy of spirit, and a temper too sanguine to permit himself to be at once depressed by misfortune. His habits were also too much formed on the models of that society for him easily to change them; and the hope that he might derive some good from preserving his high connexions, gave him a very reasonable excuse for continuing to cultivate them. One half of mankind does not know how the other half lives; neither does it care; as long as the misery and poverty of the unhappy moiety is never intruded upon the comforts and splendor of the more fortunate half.

We do not care how poor the man is who makes himself agreeable at our table, while he keeps his poverty to himself and does not trouble us with it. We care not how empty a man's purse is, provided he does not ask us to replenish it; or how severe the wants of our companions may be, so long as we are not asked to relieve them.

This appears to be but a sorry picture of human nature; but it will be found in most instances a true one. Each of us expects in his own particular case, to find it otherwise; and experience is the only touchstone that discovers the truth.

Langley had not yet made this experiment. In spite of his off-hand manner, a great portion of self-possession, and many of those qualities which make what is called a "dashing character," he had a fund of innate modesty, as well as of deep and sensitive feeling, which made him shrink from asking a favor; yet it was with this view only that he concealed his marriage, and kept in society. His Oxford education had fitted him for no particular pursuit, and he found himself thrown upon the world, fortuneless and useless; whereas, had he possessed the accomplishments of a common schoolboy, in book-keeping and arithmetic; or any useful knowledge of the commerce of his country; a hundred situations might have been open to him through the commercial connexions, of his late father. But with them Latin and Greek were useless; and the Italian method of book-keeping was more valued, than all the Italian literature, from Dante down to Sismondi.

Langley had depended much upon his literary talents, but they were of too light a nature to rank his name in the abstruser pursuits of literature; and there was then no Colburn to cater with a liberal hand for the mere entertainment of the "reading public."

He attempted a tragedy; but one manager dismissed him with many thanks for its perusal, saying, "That it was—realy—a very good play—much effect—great talent—would not suit his house; but the very thing for the other."

To the other manager he applied: but here tragedy was out of fashion.

In despair, and building his hopes on the opinion of the first manager he ventured to plead; and in pleading, detailed the past misfortunes and the present misery which drove him to the drama as a resource.

The manager eyed him with a glance of pity. "You'd better write a farce sir, and I'll act it;" said he, and dismissed the petitioner.

"Write a farce," thought Langley, as he wended his disconsolate steps homeward; "write a farce; with poverty staring me in the face; my wife's cheeks growing paler and thinner every day; my child half-starved; my whole circle surrounded by misery, and write a farce!"

The thing seemed impossible; but Langley was wrong; most farces have been written under similar circumstances. The jokes that have appeared the spontaneous result of wit, have been the coinage of sheer necessity. The scenes that had convulsed an audience with laughter have been penned amid the convulsions of disease and poverty. Puns have been the offspring of a prison, and the jocund song or buoyant scene have been invented in the midst of ruined hopes and overwhelming misfortunes.

Langley's spirit was, however, of that elastic kind, that, like Indian-rubber, it rose again in spite of all the rubs it received; and one scheme only failed, to be succeeded by another. Mrs. Langley, who, to a very fine mind, united a great portion of the much more useful quality—common sense; of which, by-the-by, one ounce is of far more utility than all the genius that ever blazed in the

page of poetry, or lay buried in that of science; saw with sorrow this tendency of her husband to pursue splendid phantoms instead of humble realities. She wished much to detach him from the scenes of gay life, which only rendered their own more wretched by the contrast; although she too saw the advantage which might be made by his connexions, provided Langley would try them, and they should prove willing to assist him.

Their morning's conversation was generally turned either upon some disappointed scheme of the yesterday, or some projected one of the morrow; occasionally interspersed with anecdotes of the party of the preceding evening by Langley, and urgent entreaties on the part of his wife to make use of those great friends who composed them. On the morning in question, over their humble muffin and souchong, unaccompanied by the varied etceteras which cover a modern breakfast-table, their colloquy took the usual turn.

"Why, as you say, my love," said Langley, in reply to some observation of his wife, "it does seem a little too bad, that I should figure away at gay parties, and keep you cooped up here in a second floor, under a false name; but you know it is all for our good, and the moment success crowns any of my schemes you shall be repaid for all."

"Ah! my dear Charles, do not think I complain of your pleasures, or that I covet any other than those I find in your society, and in the smiles of our dear infant. They are sufficient to satisfy the heart of a loving wife and an affectionate mother. But—"

"Ay," interrupted Langley; "now there is one of your killing 'buts.' You go on, my love, in the smoothest way in the world; saying the kindest, the sweetest, and the most cheering things; and then comes that odious monosyllable which I hate.—'But!' The word ought to be expunged from our language.—'But!' 'tis such an inelegant word too I wonder my darling Fanny can use it." Mrs. Langley sighed; and Langley continued, "Come, come; don't be low-spirited: I see a thousand hopes for the future."

"But what use is it, my dear Charles," asked Mrs. Langley, "to look to the future when the present almost overwhelms us?"

"Why, to be sure, I must confess, my dear Fanny, that the present is not very alluring. A portion of our chairs and tables has moved off, as though they were animal instead of vegetable quadrupeds. Our equipage is such as nature has provided for us with the rest of mankind; water is our common beverage; and tea serves us for champagne. Yet, depend on it, something will turn up yet; some of my plans must succeed at last."

"Oh, as to your plans, my dearest Charles, I have no longer any hope from them. Remember your play from which you were to make a fortune."

"True, the manager would not act it."

"Then your poem, which was to provide for me and my child for life?"

"Ay," added Langley, "and procure me a lodging in Poet's corner after my death."

"Why, the bookseller would not even read it."

"There, my Fanny, was the misfortune: had he read it, he would have published it; and it would have done all I predicted from it."

"Oh Charles, Charles! with your education what might you not do; what might it not fit you for!"

"There, my love, you are mistaken. The fact is, my education has unfitted me for every thing. A college is well enough to enable a man to dawdle through existence, and to color his conversation with quotations from the classics. I certainly am a most unlucky wight. If I were at the bar, I dare say there would not be a soul litigious enough to give me a brief. If I turned tradesman, the article I dealt in would no doubt go out of fashion; and I verily believe the greatest good I could do my country would be to set up physician; since, you may depend upon it, all the world would be healthy, to prevent me getting into practice."

"But these powerful friends," said Mrs. Langley, "who invite you so often. Surely, if you were to tell them that you were a husband, a father, and in want, they would do something for you."

"The very thing, my love, to prevent them. It is only for those who want nothing that they are willing to do every thing. And did they know how very poor I am, and that I lived perched up in a second floor, it is ten to one if they would speak to me."

"Oh Charles, Charles! this false pride will be your ruin. Oh! by all the affection which my heart feels for you, and which you profess for me; by the smiles of our innocent babe; by the remembrance of that kindness to my ruined parents, which first won my love; let me conjure you to overcome this false delicacy, and to make some struggle to rescue us from the poverty which threatens us."

"But, then, Fanny, to tell them I am so very poor; that the result of my father's dying intestate has quite ruined me; to tell them that the wit which has set their tables in a roar emanates from a broken heart—"

"Nay, Charles, poverty is only a disgrace, when it is the consequence of neglect or crime. Not when it is produced by misfortune, and supported with resignation: surely none can be so cold-hearted as to bask in the sunshine of wit, and neglect the necessities of him who exerts it for their entertainment"

"It is too generally the case though. Man is a selfish animal, contented with the surface,—but Fanny you have inspired me. I will this very day summon courage and remind a noble peer, who has treated me with distinguished kindness, of his promise to befriend me."

"Now that's my dear Charles."

"Yes, I will; so wipe away your tears, and recall one of those captivating smiles which first bewitched me into becoming your husband before I was certain of the stability of my fortunes. And yet I thought I was certain; for I never would have asked my Fanny to partake of the miseries of my poverty, although I should have been proud to have shared the luxuries of my wealth with her."

"But in case you fail, may I not try to soften the heart of my uncle? I see by the papers that he is arrived in town."

"No, Fanny. I could not bear you to ask assistance from that hardhearted relation, whose

name you have ever forborne to mention to me, on account of my indignation at his total desertion of your angelic mother.—Besides, what affection can he have for one whom he has never seen? I want to be dependent upon nothing but my own exertions. I do not wish to be a drone in the busy hive of society, and should blush to ask for a place where the labor was not adequate to the emolument. Come, Fanny, give me a kiss; I will be off to the clubs: I shall meet there with many a man in power, and will watch a favorable opportunity of preferring my suit." So saying, away went Langley to his morning's lounge at the clubs, or his stroll up Bond street and St. James's: where he never wanted a companion to laugh at his jokes or enjoy his conversation; but as to *friends*—c'est toute autre chose.

His wife turned with a sigh to her domestic occupations, fully aware of the difficulties which pride threw in the way of her husband's making any application to his friends, and of appearing a petitioner where he had always hitherto been an equal. Yet she did not blame him. She knew his good qualities; she knew how difficult a task it is for the pride of human nature to bend to solicitation, after it has once been used to command; and these thoughts, helped by her extreme affection, formed excuses for the culpable delay of Langley.

Much, however, as she dreaded giving her husband offence, she still revolved in her own mind the possibility of an application to her uncle Admiral Frankley. Her mother had been his favorite sister, though she had excited his anger by marrying Mr. Palmer against the consent of her family, yet his affection for her had been so great in her earlier life, that Mrs. Langley thought it nearly impossible for him entirely to discard her daughter. The papers had announced Admiral Frankley's return from India, and Mrs. Langley determined to find some opportunity of addressing him, either personally or by letter; but she knew this must be done secretly, and without the knowledge of her husband; and though upon any other subject she would have shuddered at acting contrary to his wishes, yet on the present occasion she felt it to be her duty to attempt the reparation of her husband's fortunes, even by means which he would disapprove.

She had herself too great an idea of the miseries of dependence not to make some allowance for the pride of her husband; and she felt by anticipation the pleasure that would be hers, should her assistance ever help to relieve their present difficulties.

But we must leave Mrs. Langley to her ruminations, and Langley to his clubs, to turn our attention to some of the more active personages of the drama.

CHAPTER IX.

LONDON LIFE.

Lady Orville was not a woman to undertake the charge of bringing out a young lady without some ulterior views; for her house was always too attractive to the world at large to require the additional motive of a new person, or a great heiress as an inmate.

Orville House was conducted upon too extensive a scale to exhibit in the morning any traces of the numerous assembly which had graced its saloons the previous evening. Every servant was at his post; every room in the same order; all the nick-knackeries of fashion and virtue arranged precisely in their ordinary places; and long before the inmates had quitted their beds, the mansion had resumed its usual appearance. One of these inmates was the only person who exhibited in her languid countenance, the absence of sleep, and the ennui, that perpetual accompaniment of subsiding excitement; and this was Emily Hartley. Unused to scenes of such gayety and bustle; unaccustomed to any thing but the domestic hours and occupations of Hartley Grove; her little head had been bewildered by the numbers, and almost turned by the flattering attention she had received. During the continuance of the party, she almost imagined herself in fairy land; the brilliance of the lights, the splendor of the apartments, the excellence of the music, of which she was passionately fond, together with the admiration she had evidently excited, had altogether bewildered her young imagination and made her for the moment think that all her anticipations of delight had been realized.

Her hand had been sought for quadrilles by all the men of fashion who condescended to dance; and in high society, as well as that of a more humble cast, this is a matter of more concern to them, than ladies are generally willing to admit. Between the dances, she had rested herself in the music-room, listening to the best airs of Mozart and Rossini, sung by the most celebrated singers of the day.

What a contrast between the tranquil evenings of Hartley Grove; the disquisitions of Forrester and her father; the quiet conversation of her mother; and the saloons of Orville House, filled with all the rank, fashion, and talent to the country.

Lord Orville too, the gay, the elegant, the fascinating Orville, had also paid her the most sedulous attention; had not only danced with her twice, a most uncommon circumstance with him, but had acted as her Asmodeus of the evening, and pointed out every body who was worth knowing in the rooms: and modern history has been so replete with wonderful events in which our contemporaries have been actors, that one scarcely enters an assembly, in which there are not many who have been celebrated by their actions, and whose names will not shine in the page of the history of our own times. Orville, however, did not confine his observations and anecdotes to mere public men; he pointed out those who derived their celebrity for the lesser attributes of beauty, fashion, or folly; and judging of Emily's mind by that of the many females whom he knew, he seasoned his anecdotes with just enough scandal and satire to give them that piquancy, without which the most brilliant conversation is ennuyant to the class and tastes of many a modern historian and reader.

Such particular attention from a man like Orville was quite sufficient to bring Emily into notice,

and, added to the attraction of a very beautiful person, and an entirely new face, it was no wonder she became "the sensation" of the evening.

The men inquired, "Who the lovely girl was to whom Orville was so devoted?" while the women wondered "what Orville could see in such a country-looking person, to pay her so much attention."

The gentlemen declared her hair auburn, the ladies that it was more inclined to red. Her blue eyes were declared quite the ne plus ultra by the former; by the latter to be insipid; the men swore her fair complexion was lovely; while the women declared, there was too much of the "milk and water" of human nature in it to permit expression.

But whatever might be the secret opinions upon Emily's pretensions to beauty, all the men wished to dance with her, and all the women envied her: nor were these feelings diminished when it was known that she was the daughter of one of the oldest and most respectable families in the country, and the certain possessor of a very large fortune.

Seeing only the admiration she excited, and dazzled by the attention she received, no wonder that the young and unsophisticated mind of Emily should be delighted. She saw the world merely on its surface, and it was all smiles and sunshine. She saw many eyes fixed upon her, and she perceived only the admiration they expressed, and was totally unconscious of the envy which she elicited, and though this in many instances forms more than half of the pleasure of being admired, Emily was not yet sufficiently refined to mingle it in her draught of pleasure. Indeed, we are not certain whether at this period, Emily would not have been gothic enough to have permitted such an idea to have considerably allayed the delight she experienced.

Although Emily had been taken to several minor parties, this had been the first grand assembly at which she had been present; and the comparison rendered all the others insipid. This perhaps had arisen more from the consequence which had been given to herself by all the attention paid her, than from any real difference. For in the main all parties are alike, and we derive more or less pleasure from them, accordingly as we feel our own consequence more or less diminished or increased by the occurrences of the evening. Such creatures of self are we all!

The delight which Emily experienced, made her watch the movements of the large French clock, which graced the chimney-piece of the saloon, with regret. The minutes and hours had never passed so rapidly; she could scarcely believe that some other hand than that of time had not moved the dial-plate. But tumultuous pleasures are great killers of time, as well as of every thing else; and what had appeared as minutes tc Emily, had actually been so many hours abstracted from the short span of her existence.

It was with a feeling of sorrow that she saw the party diminish in number, and guest after guest depart, till the final break-up of the assembly.

She then sought her dressing-room, where her maid, quite as unaccustomed as herself to the bustle of a town life, was wrapped in such a profound sleep on the sofa, that she could scarcely rouse herself to give the necessary attention to her young mistress. The really country wide-mouthed gapes with which the Abigal entertained her, during the time of her making her "toilette de nuit," communicated to Emily the first disposition for, and thoughts of sleep which she had experienced during the whole evening; although she had seen with surprise many a gay personage, in the midst of an apparently animated conversation, conceal an incipient yawn. She was not then aware how soon such scenes pall upon the senses; how soon the heart gets used to their insipidity; and that they are only sought by the many, merely to kill the time which they have not sufficient resources in themselves to pass more profitably and more pleasantly.

Oh thoughtless time-killers! how little do you know the value of the hours you are throwing away! how little do you anticipate the day which comes too soon for all of us, when we would sacrifice our whole fortunes to the power of recalling even a few of those moments which in their progress have appeared so tedious.

Emily, while in the ball-room, had thought sleep impossible; she imagined that her limbs would never tire in the quadrille; her mind never become satiated with the scene; and as she first pressed her pillow, she thought she had enough to recollect, and to lay up in her memory, to keep her awake.

With the excitement, however, her strength also passed away. It was in vain that she pictured to herself the gay scene; the lights would burn dim, and the dancers become shadowy before her closing eyes, till she sunk into a deep though feverish slumber, with one of Orville's insiduous compliments half finished in her failing memory.

The next morning found her unrefreshed, and quite oppressed by that lassitude, the never-failing consequence of over-excitement. Her mind had lost its elasticity; she no longer dwelt upon the occurrences of the evening with the pleasure that she had anticipated in her remembrances of them, and she involuntarily drew a comparison between her waking hours here at mid-day, and the healthful hilarity which had attended her morning rising at Hartley Grove, There the lark was not blither, and not very often earlier than herself; there she was welcomed by the feathered choristers of her garden, by the opening buds of flowers planted by her own hands, and by the smiles of protégées owing their existence and their happiness to herself and her family. Now the only person she had been accustomed to see, brought her coffee, with a face pale from nightly watching. Poor Mrs. Tomkins sunk much sooner under the effect of the London hours than her mistress, and, beginning by observing that Miss Emily "was not at all the moral of what she was in the country," indulged herself in a long tirade against London dissipation and London servants; indeed the poor girl, with her primitive notions, had been such a capital butt for the exercise of the wit at the second table, that she had enjoyed no peace since her arrival; and nothing but her love for her young lady would have tempted her to stay a moment longer in a house where much more of the real "goings on," as Mrs. Tomkins called them, was known to herself than to her mistress. As Emily, however, became refreshed by her coffee, the elasticity of her mind returned, and the pleasures of a gay life again assumed their ascendency over her imagination.

The plans which will be developed as our history proceeds, had no chance for success, while Emily's mind still remained attached to the pursuits of the country, and to the species of life she had quitted. The whole power of Lady Orville, her son and daughter, were therefore devoted to wean her from her early predilections, to cast a shade of ridicule over her early pursuits, and to bestow upon the pleasures of a town life such a blazonry as would give all the former enjoyments of her existence no character but that of insipidity.

Mrs. Tomkins, in her rustic blunt way, had detailed that Lord Orville's servant had sworn to her that his master was already madly in love with her young mistress. "To be sure," added she, "there is no wonder in that; for I myself should be in love with you, if I were a man, which heaven forbid should ever be the case, for they have a world of sin, the very best of them, to carry to their graves. But though Lord Orville is called the finest man of the day, I think him no more to compare to Mr. Forrester, than Mounseer Fripon, my lord's French vallet, is to my Thomas, your sweetheart's huntsman. Oh how I wish I could hear his dear horn, and his so-ho, so-ho, again."

Emily stopped the prating of her waiting-maid by dismissing her suddenly with a sharp reprimand for having made her the subject of conversation in the steward's room; and poor Mrs. Tomkins retired, surprised at seeing, for the first time in her life, that her young mistress was seriously displeased.

"Ah! it is all along of this smoky London air," said she, as she shut the door, and cast an angry glance at the foggy atmosphere without.

Her words, however, had made a deeper impression than Emily herself was willing to allow. The contrast between the acquired elegance of Lord Orville and the rustic ease though good manners of Forrester, had more than once forced themselves upon her imagination; and she had several times detected herself in drawing a comparison between the fashionable and sprightly, and sometimes brilliant conversation of the town-bred peer, and the more solid, though less striking observations of a country gentleman.

"The finest man of the day!" True, thought she, Lord Orville does indeed bear that character. "In love with me!" and her vanity, at least for a moment was pleased with the idea. And what woman, perfect as ever human nature will permit her to be, is without a share of vanity? "No—no, no, it cannot be;" and she paused, even in her thoughts, to debate upon the possibility of such an event; and again, as she drew a comparison between her own rusticity and the manners of the fashionable women to whose society he had been used, and by whom he was surrounded, her humility set it down as an impossibility. Still, however, she could not drive the idea from her mind, and she was obliged to recall to her memory that it had only been engendered by the prattle of a servant, before she could banish it entirely.

At this moment Clara Dallas, a cousin of the Orville family, and a ward of the late earl's, entered the dressing room; she had retired from the party of the preceding evening much earlier than Emily, and had therefore not broken so much in upon her day to recover from its fatigues.

Clara Dallas was one of those few young ladie in whose minds and imagination romance had no place. Ungifted by nature with any extraordinary beauty of person, she was liked by her companions, because she never outshone them in that upon which woman are too apt to pride themselves; and they thought little of that superior good sense which she possessed, because it seldom intruded itself upon their notice; or, if observed, only excited their ridicule.

Clara had no imagination, but she had a fund of good sense. She looked upon life as a reality, and indulged herself in no dreams of pleasure which did not exist; but this way of looking at society had given a matter of fact frankness to her conversation, which sometimes destroyed the fine flourishing tirades of more brilliant colloquists.

She had often been a guest at Hartley Grove, had conceived a great affection for Emily, and had become interested in the character of Mr. Forrester, which she saw in all its excellence, and knew well how to appreciate. Yet, with all this she sometimes feared that his influence over so gay a mind as Emily's, might not be sufficient to counteract the flattery by which she was surrounded in the great world to which she had so suddenly been introduced.

Entering the room in her own quiet way, (for Clara never did any thing in a hurry or bustle, and never acted under excitement,) Emily did not at first perceive her; and Clara accordingly had an opportunity of witnessing the abstraction of countenance with which her previous thoughts had been accompanied.

"What, Emily: she at length exclaimed, and Emily started, blushing, as though her thoughts had been words, and had been overheard. "What, musing! That looks rather suspicious. Take care, my dear, lest the influence of our friend Forrester should be shaken by the sight of our more fashionable, but less praiseworthy beaux of St. James's."

"Oh, I have still the same friendship for Mr. Forrester, I assure you," slowly and blushingly answered Emily, internally astonished at this coincidence between the observation of Clara and her own thoughts.

"Friendship!" repeated Clara, thoughtfully, and looking so intently in Emily's face that she turned her eyes away from her gaze. "Ah, Emily, beware how you suffer the tinsel glitter of brilliant talents and polished manners to outshine the more solid, though more modest, virtues of a good heart and sound understanding."

"Nay now, my dear Clara," replied Emily, "you are too severe. Brilliant talents are not incompatible with virtue, nor does wit betray the want of understanding; neither are polished manners necessarily accompanied by hypocrisy. And you must certainly acknowledge, my dear matter-of-fact Clara, that Mr. Forrester's manners and accomplishments, excellent as they are, can scarcely be put in competition with the wit and elegance by which I am now surrounded."

"I will not acknowledge any such thing," rejoined Clara. "Edward Forrester's modesty has little chance, it is true, amid the blaze of impertinence which is dignified with the title of wit; his talents may not be able to cope with success in

fashionable conversations, but they will shine in rational ones; and that is of much more consequence to domestic happiness."

"But yet you must allow," argued Emily, "how very many are his superiors in manners; and manners, you know, Clara, give a polish even to trifles. Now when Lord Orville enters a room, or pays a compliment, or utters a sentence, there is a grace which——which——" and Emily hesitated at finding that she was actually imbodying those thoughts which she had been just now so anxious to conceal—"which," she again repeated——

"Which can so dazzle us by its varnish that we do not perceive the worthlessness of what it covers," continued Clara, finishing the sentence for her friend. "Your candor betrays you; but beware how you suffer yourself to be misled by the glitter of an ignis fatuus, in the pursuit of which many have lost their happiness, and more than one their honor."

"You almost alarm me. Yet I do not quite understand you," exclaimed Emily, looking anxiously for an explanation.

"I wish to do so; I am myself alarmed, both for Forrester and yourself, at the evident attentions which are paid you in a certain quarter. My long friendship induces this anxiety for your happiness; and your hitherto total exclusion from the world authorizes me to tell you, that Lord Orville, under the brilliant talents and the most fascinating manners, conceals—"

"Hush," exclaimed Emily; and they both became silent as the door opened, and Lady Sophia, his lordship's unmarried sister, entered the room.

"Oh, my darling Emily," exclaimed she; but stopped short in her address, on perceiving Clara's and Emily's anxious countenances. "Why Clara," continued she, "what are you doing with my sweet pupil? I sha'n't suffer any of your gravities to cloud her mind, and deaden the enjoyment of her entrance into gay life. Why, you've made her pout already, I declare."

"No, Sophia; but I have been trying, I own, to enable her inexperience to distinguish truth from the quantity of fiction by which she was surrounded," answered Clara; "however, I now leave her in the hands of her more lively chaperone. But, my dear Emily, amid the brilliancy of her sallies, do not quite forget the word of advice that I have given you; and which, if not very palatable, has at least the merit of being well intended." And so saying, she left the room.

Lady Sophia accompanied her good morning with a haughty toss of the head, which was unperceived by Emily. She saw in a minute, by the countenance of the latter, that Clara had been counteracting some of her brother's plots, and that she had most probably been warning her against his character. Imagining this, she determined to eradicate any impression Emily might have imbibed, before it should obtain a deeper hold upon her mind.

"Poor Clara," said she, with a sigh; "I really pity her from my soul; but then, you know, young women should not surrender their hearts before they are solicited. I dare say now she has been complaining to you of the cruelty of my brother.—But it is all pique—"

"Pique!" exclaimed Emily.

"Oh yes. Didn't you know that she took it into her head to think of Orville; but finding him insensible, has almost hated him ever since."

"Hated him!" again exclaimed Emily, as her knowledge of Clara's meek and placid character rose to her imagination.

"Yes," reiterated Lady Sophia; "you know Ezra says,

> 'Heaven has no rage like love to hatred turn'd,
> Nor hell a fury like a woman scorn'd;'

and you know poets always tell truth."

"This then," thought Emily, "accounts for her advice; and I need not alarm myself."

"But away with the splenetic lessons of Clara," continued Lady Sophia, "which always fall like a lump of lead upon the quicksilver of my spirits. What think you of our party last night?"

"Oh, delightful!"

"Such a squeeze; wasn't it? Sir Scamper Tandem swore he could get no farther than the first landing; my poor beau Shatterham absolutely stuck in the hall; young Twistleton was cooled after the first quadrille by a pine-apple ice that was tossed into his cambric-colored bosom by the old Lord Adlington; and the Duchess of Crambo's magnificent brocade, just imported from Genoa, was entirely spoiled by a glass of champaigne which Sir Peter Dashley poured over her instead of into his own capacious stomach.—But here—here's a list of engagements for you—"

"For me!" exclaimed Emily.

"Oh yes; a whole pack of cards, I declare. Why, my dear, you're a novelty, and have absolutely created a sensation. I quite envy you (and here Lady Sophia spoke truth.) Wherever you go, 'Who is she?' will be buzzed in your ears from a thousand different quarters; and you will have the pleasure of hearing yourself described as a most intimate acquaintance by a thousand puppies who never set eyes on you before."

"But from whom are these cards?" inquired Emily.

"Oh from a hundred kind friends who never saw you before in their lives. Here's Lady Altingham's routs for Mondays; the Countessa Paulina's opera suppers for Tuesdays; the Honorable Mrs. Dashwood's concerts for Wednesdays; the old Marquis of Eatington's dinners for Thursdays; the Duchess of Langton's quadrilles for Fridays; Mrs. Von Brommel's early at homes for Saturdays; and the Countess of Chatterton's conversazioni for Sundays; that being a day on which it is deemed that all innocent amusements shall cease, excepting cards and scandal."

"Bless me, my dear Lady Sophia! why I shall be killed—"

"Killed!" repeated Lady Sophia. "Oh no, my dear. It takes a great deal of dissipation to kill a woman: at least if one may judge from the manner in which it agrees with so many of our dowagers, who have not only served an apprenticeship, but devoted a whole life to its pursuit. But these are only the regulars; we have fifty supernumerary parties on the list. To-day, for instance, we have a dinner at the Honorable Mr. Rattall's, M. P. and reformist; who, during the war, railed at our enemies in the Senate, while he added to their revenue

by getting tipsy with their wines in his dining parlor; who appeared a patriot in his eloquence abroad, while he was any thing but patriotic in his pursuits at home. There, the wines of our foes sparkled upon the table, while those of our allies were banished to his sideboard and his steward's room; and the humble, though hearty beverage of old England was confined to the kitchen and the cellar. He is perpetually roaring out for liberty abroad, while poor Mrs. Rattall and her family are never permitted to enjoy a particle of it at home."

"Upon my word, I begin to think Clara right in warning me against your powers of invention," said Emily, laughing at her spirits and volubility.

"Not at all, my dear Emily. But you will judge for yourself. There will be our host, supported on either side by peers, peeresses, and messieurs, and mesdames, M. P.'s—for I assure you the wives seem to think themselves quite as much in Parliament as their husbands. There, all swallow the good things presented to their lips, without paying much attention to those that are intended for their ears. You will hear Mr. Rattall one moment say, 'Liberty of speech is every thing;' while the next moment he cuts his wife short with, 'Really, Mrs. Rattall, I must insist on your keeping your arguments upon this subject to yourself,' and so on. Well then, to-morrow, old Lady Vizard sees her friends in pasteboard."

"In pasteboard?" exclaimed Emily, with surprise, and with an inquiring look.

"Ye," replied Sophia. "In other words she sees masks for the benefit of many of her friends who are ashamed to show their faces."

"I shall then, indeed, be pleased," said Emily; "for I have always wished to see a masquerade, and shall be delighted to see the characters well supported."

"Oh! my dear innocent, you were never more mistaken in your life than in such an expectation. It is too much trouble for many of them to support their own characters, and they seldom meddle with those of other people, excepting to take them away. A modern masquerade is merely a squeeze of dominos that mean nothing, and characters that don't know what they mean; such a crowd of harlequins without agility, nuns without devotion, Minervas without wisdom, and Venuses devoid of beauty, that you will be quite delighted, and have the pleasure of teazing your dearest friends and nearest relations with the chance of remaining undiscovered."

"Very delightful, truly," observed Emily.

"But fancy balls are the rage now, and masquerades are exploded; none but such an old dowager as Lady Vizard would think of giving one. The poor old lady remembers what they were twenty years ago, when, it is said——but I will not be scandalous, at any rate upon people whose age leaves them no chance for any thing but repentance."

Emily shrank like a sensitive leaf from this last observation of her lively companion, but hesitatingly said, "Well then, I think I shall like the conversazioni best after all. There, at any rate, amusement will be blended with instruction."

"Instruction! Oh, you delicious novice; instruction! True, you may hear from the men a discussion of the chances for the next St. Leger or Derby; and from the women the comparative merits of an *imbecille* and *seduisante*; or which of these abominable excrescences is fittest for the morning or the evening. Old Lord Lumber-Court will tell you the precise way to curry a lobster, and Charles Huntley the best method of currying a horse. If anybody speaks of wit, criticism, or literature, Sir Frederick Tandem interrupts him with an essay on horsemanship, and speaks of his *whippery*, as he calls it, as a natural historian would of his zoological or mineralogical collection: while Lady Trippington indulges herself with a dissertation on quadrilles, lauds Collinet's 101st set to the skies, and praises the *pas de chasse* and *pas de zephyr*, without shrinking from the faux pas which certain little inuendos and initials in the newspaper attributed to her last season. But come, you look grave, tired, I dare say, with my rattle; so go to your toilet. The horses will be here in half an hour; and with Orville and myself you shall gallop away the blue devils in the Park. And away ran the rattling Lady Sophia, leaving Emily bewildered by her volubility, and scarcely knowing whether to laugh or look grave at what certainly contained much amusement, though mingled with sentiments and allusions, from which the innate delicacy of Emily's mind shrank with a feeling of disgust. She could join Lady Sophia in her laugh at the follies of the world of both sexes; but to hear any deviations from the right path by her own, treated with levity, and made the subject of amusement by a young lady, filled her with astonishment; and it required all the goodness of Emily's nature to find an apology for this in the violent animal spirits of Lady Sophia Orville.

Lady Sophia was one of those young women who have early given unbridled license to conversation: cried up on her coming out as a wit, she frightened the men from proposals which might otherwise have been made for her; till disappointed at seeing companions with less pretensions forming splendid establishments, while she remained Lady Sophia Orville, the bitterness of her nature gave its predominence to her character, and she became the satirist of vice and folly, without imbibing a just contempt for the one, or a proper horror of the other.

Vice and folly, however, were not the only objects for her satire. The virtues of domestic life were quite as much subjects for her ridicule as the profligacy which destroyed them; and she looked upon the woman who devoted herself to what she denominated the domestic drudgery of the "household gods," merely as the slave of her husband and of prejudice. Educated without the benefit of example as well as precept; thrown very early into one of those fashionable establishments then in vogue for the tuition of young women; a young and strong mind had been suffered to form itself; and a variety of desultory reading, without the power to discriminate, had produced the effect of giving her great ideas of her own judgment, and great contempt for the opinions of others.

When, therefore, she had no game to play, and gave way to the natural bent of her disposition, she became this disputatious dasher, dictating laws to her little circle, astonishing every one with the boldness of her remarks, and frequently disgusting the most sensible of her hearers by sentiments in

morals and religion, that were any thing rather than those which should have emanated from a young female.

Lady Sophia loved to astonish, and cared very little how much she displeased, unless she had an object in view; and then Lady Sophia could veil her real character with the success of the most experienced hypocrisy. She could be in appearance as exclusive and feminine, as she was in reality masculine and familiar, could freeze by her silence as well as astonish by her effrontery; and when she wished it, could gain her object as well by insinuation, as on other occasions she could take it by storm.

With all this she was greatly the fashion; those who did not admire her feared her; to be ranked among her intimates was the desire of most of those who frequented Orville House. Every man was delighted to dance with her, to flirt with her, to hand her to her carriage, to do every thing, but —marry her.

CHAPTER X.

A CHARACTER.

The Countess of Orville, whenever she found those high passions which had been the bane of her life breaking through the bounds within which she had generally the power to preserve them in public, retired to the solitude of her own boudoir, until she could smooth her ruffled brow, and redress her face, in those bland smiles which gave such youthful grace to her matronly beauty, and which persuaded indifferent beholders that she was one of the best tempered, as well as one of the happiest women in the world. And who that saw her bright eyes sparkling with pleasure, her face clothed in smiles, and heard the softness of her voice uttering the best sentiments of human nature in the most elegant language, would have imagined Lady Orville to be the woman she really was; or have thought that such a woman could realize Voltaire's description of

"Le ciel est dans ses yeux, l'enfer est dans son cœur."

It was neverthless but too true.

In the solitude of this boudoir she revolved all those schemes and plans of which her life had been one continued series. Love, ambition, hatred, and revenge had all by turns swayed the soul of this violent woman by their influence; and they were all equally fatal to the peace of the object by whom they were excited, or by whom they were to be gratified.

As a wife, she had been paramount over the weak Earl whom her ambition had selected for a husband; as a mother, she only looked to the increase of her own power by the splendid establishment of her children; and as a woman, she gave unbridled license and indulgence to any and to every passion by which she was by turns influenced.

Lady Olivia Tressel, her youngest daughter, had been sacrificed at the shrine of the immense wealth of a dilapidated Nabob, who brought over millions of rupees from Calcutta, to render his jaundiced countenance and broken constitution more palatable to any woman who might be purchased to share his fortune and his bed: and Lady Olivia had been literally purchased, since a portion of the gold for which she had been sacrificed was devoted to the payment of certain heavy mortgages which had for a long period of years weighed down the Orville estates. It required, however, all the arts of Lady Orville as a woman, and all her influence as a mother, to accomplish this sacrifice. Tears, threats, entreaties, representations, and misrepresentations were pressed into the service by mother, brother, and sister, till at length, hopeless of ever marrying the only man she loved, who had no other recommendation than an elegant person and fascinating manners, Lady Olivia gave a sullen consent, and became the unwilling and discontented bride of the tropical Mr. Tressel.

The other children had imbibed too much of the mother's character to be so easily led from their inclinations; but as there was no lack of ambition in either of them, and a plentiful sprinkling of pride in both their dispositions, it was not likely that either the one or the other would form establishments which would be displeasing to her.

Much, however, as Lady Orville was devoted to, and much as she seemed to court, the world, she internally despised that public opinion by which she regulated her outward conduct; and detested those trammels of society which condemned her to keep her fiery passions within the limits of apparent propriety, or to sacrifice the privileges of her rank and station.

These had, more than once during her career, been in imminent danger of being forfeited; and had only been preserved by consummate art and unabashed effrontery.

While many a more innocent woman than Lady Orville had been "whistled down the wind" by the scorn of a misjudging and unfeeling world, for a single fault (the result, perhaps, of man's perfidy and woman's credulity), Lady Orville, with a hundred more flagrant sins upon her conscience, still maintained her station, still joined the crowd in its contempt for the fallen of her sex, while the only circumstance that rendered them the object either of her anger or her pity, was their being "found out."

Concealment was the only virtue she acknowledged; passions might be indulged, and inclinations gratified, so long as the world knew nothing of the matter. Her *code morale* consisted in their not being discovered; and I am afraid to think in how many minds it is not the fear of the sin, but of its consequences, that preserves from its commission.

Lady Orville's life was, therefore, one continued masquerade, one perpetual system of self-indulgence, and of schemes for its concealment. There was but one person in the world to whom she ever threw away the mask, and gave a loose to the real sentiments of her soul. This was the Marchesa

di Villanai, an English divorcée, married to a Florentine nobleman. Caroline Delmar and the Countess had been school-fellows, and a congeniality of disposition had made them friends.

They had both been married at the same time to men that neither of them loved. In the fulness of female confidence this natural disinclination to their husbands did not long remain a secret, any more than the results, which were the too natural consequences of passion so ill regulated as theirs; and to minds in which there had been no pains to instil those principles of rectitude which can only exist upon a sure basis, when they are founded upon the sentiments of religion.

Her friend, however, either did not possess the art of the Countess, or despised the concealment which was the preservation of Lady Orville. She sat the world at defiance by eloping with her paramour; a divorce was the consequence; but flying to the shelter of the more lenient morals of the Continent, she contrived to get into good society, and, deserted by the man for whom she had sacrificed her good name, her fortune, which was in her own right, tempted a needy Italian Marquis to give her irregularities the countenance of his name, and to the cast off mistress, the title of his wife.

Lady Orville, the moment that intrigue became public, of which she had long been the confidant in private, was among the first and most vehement of the many declaimers against the unfortunate and guilty culprit, whose only difference from the Countess was, the being a more honest sinner than herself.

But though she blamed her in the world for the crime, she upbraided her in private only for the exposé, which might so easily have been avoided by the exertion of a little prudence. With these sentiments although she could not publicly acknowledge Caroline still as a friend, she yet saw her in secret, while she remained in England, and kept up an occasional and not unfrequent correspondence with her on the Continent. It was in these letters only that Lady Orville ventured to be herself, and at this moment she found a relief from her present feelings, by unbosoming herself to her friend in the following letter:—

THE COUNTESS OF ORVILLE TO THE MARCHESA DI VILLANAI.

Once more, Caroline, do I take up my pen to address you, or rather to relieve myself, by throwing off the mask which all these little tramels of society compel me to wear, and once more at least to be myself. Oh, how tedious, how heart-wearing is this thraldom of life! what misery to be always thus a hypocrite. I really am half inclined to envy you that daring spirit which enabled you to burst these chains asunder, and fly to the enjoyment of your own opinions and freedom, in the more lenient and less fastidious circles of your dear Italy. And after all what did you give up? merely an endless routine of chilling forms and ceremonies, at which we laughed in private, although we pretended to respect them in public; merely that friendship and opinion of the "thousand and one," whose imbecility we despised; and that caste in society here, which good fortune, your superior genius, and a convenient husband has procured for you elsewhere.

It was certainly a fiery ordeal to pass through at first, but by one great sacrifice you have purchased freedom. What could a Roman do more? To be sure, the man for whom you made the sacrifice of name and character, and all that to which the fiat of the silly world has given but a false estimation, deserted you; first tempted and then quitted you; vowed endless love and perpetual fidelity, and finished his eternity in a month. Oh! these men, respected amid the indulgence of their unruly passions, they call ours into play by their sweet words "false as dicer's oaths," and then desert and despise us for the very credulity which has given them their power. Ought we to be blamed for deceiving them? Husbands, brothers, fathers, where is there one of them that has not been a betrayer in his time? Yet they move on unblushingly! and win their way in the world with honor through a thousand acts, each one of which would cast a poor woman out of the pale of society for ever. And are we to be blamed for deceiving them? for deceiving those whose greatest triumph is our fall; whose lists of conquests are made up of our shame; and who build their celebrity upon our weakness? No, no, no; early circumstances, as you are aware, gave me a long and bitter account against them; and the longest life bestowed upon a woman would not enable me to balance it by the infliction of the half that I have endured.

Oh, Arlington, what a different existence might I have passed, had I never known you! or had you been faithful to those early vows which first called my heart and passions into existence! Yet, what am I saying? had that been the case, I might have turned into one of those very dull domestic drudges of their husbands' will who are now the subjects of our ridicule; what a crowd of ideas has not the mention of that name recalled! our school-days, our vacations, our coming out, and all the thousand circumstances of childhood, rise to my imagination. Oh, those days of innocence! yet were they happy? But I have been revenged—if not upon him, upon the rest of his perfidious sex, for his sake; and he, you know, is self-banished from the influence of my power. It is strange you should never have crossed him in Italy; for there they say he lives under some assumed name—but to my plans, in which his name, if not himself, is involved.

You know how many years an old school-fellow, Lady Emily Hartley, has been immured in the country. Well, like myself, she is now the mother of children grown into man and womanhood. It is really frightful, my dear, to think how time passes, and what events it brings about. I have always kept up my connexion with her by an annual visit to the Grove at Christmas: at first, I confess with a little malice in my intention, for I found it difficult to bear the sight of her continued happiness; and thinking perhaps the draught of life might prove too sweet for her, I confess to have tried to squeeze a little acid into it, by attempting to get up a flirtation with her husband, who is really a very sensible creature, and was rendered quite piquant by the novelty of his honesty and

straightforwardness. But, would you believe it, I found the dolt as insensible to my coquetry, as I did his wife free from the slightest particle of jealousy. I hardly dare acknowledge to you that an almost involuntary feeling of respect stole over me as I found myself forced to give up my little innocent scheme; from which, however, I promised myself nothing more than a month's amusement, and the hope of a periodical annual flirtation "*pour passer le temps*" in the dull Christmas nolydays.

Yet, as I have looked upon the quiet happiness of our old school-fellow, and found the idea of wedded comfort to be not quite chimerical; I have been sometimes tempted to feel with Hume, and to wish that "I too had never doubted." But this is folly. The smooth and quiet tenor of her life would never have suited such souls as ours.

Failing in my flirtation scheme, I have formed others more consequential, and perhaps more legitimate; and these are to unite my children with theirs. Their son has just quitted college. He is heir to fifteen thousand per annum from his father, and is, you know, also presumptive successor to the title and estates of Arlington. I will not conceal from you that there is a feeling of revenge upon that heartless man mingled in my desire for this match; for I know nothing would give Lord Arlington a more bitter feeling than that a child of mine should bear the title which he once led her mother to expect was to be hers; and that my daughter should reign in those halls of which he once pledged himself that her mother should be the mistress.

Their daughter I intend for Orville. She will have an immense fortune, and the influence of the Hartley family once under my guidance, may raise him to the first offices of the state.

Such are my present shemes, of which none are of course aware, excepting Orville and Sophia; but I have so far succeeded as to have brought Emily Hartley up to spend her first winter in London with me, when I trust Orville, with a little of my assistance, will soon eradicate the evils of her country education, and efface an impression which a very good sort of man, of the name of Forrester, has contrived to make upon her young heart.

Young Hartley I have turned entirely over to Orville and his sister.—When I first saw him I had some intentions of trying if I could prove more successful with the son than with the father. There is a manliness in his character, and a naiveté about the nature of the creature, that would have given an affair with him, at any rate, the zest of novelty; for one is really fatigued with the *usé* hearts one generally meets with in society, and tired of those who pursue the mere turnpike roads of pleasure exactly according to the regular rules of passionless intrigue, and never venture out of the beaten track. Fearful, however, if once in my thraldom, his future conquest by Sophia might not be so easy, I generously gave up the scheme.

Olivia gets on pretty well with her nabob. She married for riches, and she has them; and those who marry merely for happiness can seldom say they have attained it; she therefore has the advantage. She rattles her chains rather too vehemently; but I hope her husband will not trouble her long, and she will then be the richest widow in town, with the liberty of pleasing herself. Money, Caroline, is a positive good. It purchases every thing we want; and if it did not always procure the reality, why the counterfeit is so good that it is not easily detected. Happiness may vanish; love may wear out without any fault of ours; but money remains so long as there are funds, strong boxes, and prudence. Why do we not think of all this when we are young; why wait till we have wasted or thrown away that which is both freedom and power? It is this which has induced my inviting our cousin Admiral Frankley, whom you used to denominate a sea-monster, a caliban. He is one of those "wise men come from the East" with a prodigious fortune; and should he not discover the child of a beloved sister, who married against his consent, and who, now that she is dead, he would willingly forgive (how like a *man*,) I trust that a great portion of this will alight among us.

You now know all my principal schemes. As to the hundred little collateral ones, which must occupy a busy woman in this busy world, they are too numerous to detail. Many of them make me wish you were once more among us; for a coadjutor is one of the essentials in society. Sometimes I think I shall follow your example, and set up my standard where one is not crossed at every turn by some silly regulation of affected fastidiousness; but my duty as a mother stands in the way of this desirable project, and keeps me here, where I shall ever be my dear Caroline's sincere friend.

CECILIA.

CHAPTER XI.

TOWN AND COUNTRY

SUCH was the style of society into which our young Oxonian Frank Hartley, with his sister, was thrown; and it may easily be imagined that it required more strength of mind and greater experience in the world than either of them possessed, totally to withstand the influence of the various seductive circumstances by which they were surrounded. Both of them, unfortunately for themselves, were peculiarly alive to ridicule. This was easily discovered by Lord Orville and by Lady Sophia; and became an almost never-failing weapon to mould them to their various purposes. Sophia, however, could as yet make no impression upon Hartley. In spite of the dissipation into which he had plunged, and of the variety and elegance of the women whom he had seen, the remembrance of the Curate's daughter at Oxford was not entirely erased; and nothing but the fear of that ridicule which he knew would be the inevitable consequence of such a communication, could have prevented his confiding the tale of his early love to Orville, in reply to his repeated banterings on the subject of his insensibility.

It was almost a passion of Lord Orville to lead young men into every kind of excess, and to render them as dissipated as himself; and more

than one father had to curse the influence of this young nobleman for the subversion of their son's morals, if not of the destruction of their constitutions. This seductive influence was greatly assisted by the brilliancy of his talents, and by that fascination of manner, which added to his rank, inspired many young men with a wish of imitation which often led to their ruin. An experienced gambler, he generally played high, and was successful. A great admirer of beauty, and a libertine in his opinions with regard to women; it had been whispered that more than one had been already sacrificed to his wishes, and betrayed by his falsehood. Yet he carried his sins upon him so lightly and so gracefully, and had such a flow of wit and animal spirits, that the world was ever more ready to blame his victims than himself; and when the facts were too broad for denial or concealment, people were always more willing to suppose him to have been seduced by the lures which had been spread for him, than that he had himself been the cold-hearted ruin-seeker. Indeed he had so much the art to—

"Make the worse appear the better reason,"

that whatever happened, he generally contrived to have the argument and the world in his own favor.

This was a person peculiarly dangerous to a man of such a wavering character as that of Hartley, who had been at college "everything by turns, and nothing long;" led away by every new pursuit; now a huntsman, now a student, now a lover, and now a stoic; according to the influence of the moment; yet he possessed a fund of good feeling and of sound principle. He would have started with horror at the idea of seduction; have despised himself if he could have been guilty of falsehood, even to a woman; and have shrunk with dismay from anything like a determined propensity to the gaming table.

He escaped easily from the set by which his friend Lascelles was surrounded, because their pursuits were not of a character to interest him; and because there is a vulgarity inseparably connected with boxing, cock-fighting, and horse-racing, which disgusted him. But with Orville it was widely different. Vice in his hands was clothed with an elegance which hid its deformity; sensuality assumed the grace and name of sentiment; seduction sought its apology through the uncontrollable influence of passion; while his more common intrigues were pursued with the fastidious particularity of a sybarite. There was nothing to disgust the eye or the ear. What Orville wanted in principle he made up in taste, and was as perfect an epicure in his pleasures, as Apicius was in his table; while the pursuit of them was conducted with an elegance and refinement in which Petronius himself could have found nothing wanting.

This was a dangerous character to be the constant companion of a young man just entering life; and the knowledge that it was Lady Orville's intention to make him his brother-in-law, did not exempt Hartley from Lord Orville's propensity to make others as bad and vicious as himself. Nay, in the present instance, he argued that he should be doing his sister a service by giving her husband that experience before marriage which it might be very uncomfortable to her for him to have to gain afterward; and by initiating him into that knowledge of the world, which he asserted it was necessary for every man to possess. And too generally, indeed, is this pursuit of vice denominated knowledge of the world; as though that knowledge only consisted in those things which should be known only to be avoided.

A certain knowledge of the world is no doubt necessary; but he who acquires his knowledge at the expense of his morals, is the worse for his education.

Almost the constant companion of Lord Orville, Hartley could not avoid frequently joining in pursuits and parties at which he would rather not have been present; but as he became more accustomed to them, the effect they at first produced gradually wore off, and from being a passive spectator he at length became occasionally a participator of scenes and pleasures in the evening, which at first invariably produced repentance in the morning. If ever we suffer the rigidity of our principles to give way in the pursuit of pleasure, it is astonishing how quickly those principles become totally undermined. One step leads to another, till, being accustomed to that which we once considered vice, the frequency of its recurrence takes from it that character. We then follow it as a matter of course, and consider it among the common circumstances of life.

Hartley's principles did not rapidly give way; but still he was seduced by the influence of Orville into many scenes at which he blushed, when their real character forced itself on his mind; nor could all the elegance that accompanied these pursuits, nor all the ingenious sophistry of Orville, entirely prevent his shrinking from the remembrance of them with bitter feelings of repentance.

Young, handsome, and rich as he was, he soon also found himself courted by a class of females of a certain age, whose conduct had been just sufficiently scrupulous to keep them within the pale of society, and who do more towards undermining a young man's principles with regard to women, and towards lessening his respect for them, than all the ebullition of youthful passion, or any success that may crown the pursuits to which they excite him. By this class of females, many a man who would otherwise have pursued his way quietly and harmlessly through the world, has been transformed into a libertine and a coxcomb; and there is, unfortunately, scarcely any circle of society in which these dangerous Circes are not to be found.

Hartley was, however, far from falling into all the temptations by which he was surrounded; but by giving himself up totally to the scenes of dissipation and gayety, and occupying himself by no useful or solid pursuits, the power of resistance became gradually weakened; and when, in his fits of right reasoning, he would have withdrawn from some party projected by Lord Orville, he was assailed by such a volley of ridicule from that nobleman and his companions, that he was generally obliged to resign himself to their influence.

Lady Orville saw that reflection would not aid her schemes, and she therefore added her exertions towards keeping his mind perpetually occupied by

pleasure; leaving no time either for his mind or that of Emily to reflect, she calculated that they would soon lose the power as well as the inclination; and that their present life of excitement would soon obliterate all wish to return to their former tranquil existence.

In the mean time, poor Emily's mind became sadly bewildered by the round of pleasure to which she had so suddenly been introduced. Plied by the flattery of Lord Orville on one side, and perpetually subject to the insidious persuasions and examples of Lady Orville and Sophia on the other; she already began to look upon her past existence as time that had been lost; and at the thoughts and feelings that then gave her pleasure, as the mere result of her childhood and inexperience. Tha perpetual state of excitement in which she was kept, perverted her imagination, and gave her no time to form a correct judgment of the scenes in which her time was spent, or the characters by which she was surrounded.

Sometimes, with her waking thoughts would come a recollection of the tranquil pleasures of Hartley Grove, and with it all the accompanying remembrances of Edward Forrester and his attentions, and of her mother's kindness and example; but before they could have sufficient influence to unwarp her mind from its present thraldom, the tempters were at her side, new scenes of pleasure were presented, and the same giddy whirl continued.

If reflection intruded for a moment, it was banished by some new pursuit; and if she even ventured to allude to her country life, a torrent of ridicule was sure to silence her remarks. and made her ashamed of owning that she had ever derived any enjoyment from it. We are sorry also to add, that the elegance of Lord Orville had often made her draw comparisons between that young nobleman and Edward Forrester, not quite in favor of the latter.

"Come now, Emily," said Lady Sophia to her one evening, as they sat down after the fatigues of a quadrille, "you must certainly acknowledge this to be a little better than vegetating like a cabbage-rose in the country, with no other beau than the prosing Mr. Forrester. Come, confess, is not your new mode of life delightful to you?"

"I do confess," replied Emily, "that I, indeed, find it delightful; but I have so long been taught to dread the thorns, that I scarcely dare enjoy the flowers.

"What!" exclaimed Lord Orville, who had caught this sentence en passant: "is it our charming rustic who is moralising so poetically about thorns and flowers? and is Miss Hartley weak enough to follow the musty maxims of those dull cynics, who, because they have been once stung by a bee, and once wounded by a thorn, would have us forswear honey and roses to the end of our lives? We modern philosophers know better; we enjoy all the pleasures of the bee with no more toil than the butterfly."

"Ay, but remember," said Emily, "that gay and volatile insect perishes with the summer, in whose sun it has idly basked; while the industrious bee—"

"Is blown up by gunpowder for the sake of the honey which his labor has accumulated," interrupted Lord Orville. "This is the reward of his industry; and surely you must allow that it is better to expire amid the sweets of flowers on whose leaves you have led a life of delight, than live to be suffocated amid the stores, which we have collected through hours of toil and pain."

"Well argued, Frederick," exclaimed Sophia; "the butter-fly has it all to nothing."

"Hitherto, Miss Emily, believe me, you have only vegetated. Here you will begin to live.—Begin to feel the power of your charms; and," lowering his voice into a sound modulated tenderness, "to make others feel it."

Emily felt agitated, she scarcely knew why; for compliments were now familiar to her ear.

"Oh yes," cried Lady Sophia; "London, dear London, is the place after all. As to the country, I never could endure it. There every day in the week passes in the same dull monotony. For want of better society, one is obliged to take the village apothecary by way of a sleeping potion; or to keep one's self awake by quarreling at litigious whist with the attorney—"

"While the only amusement on a wet Sunday," continued Lord Orville, "is a shivering visit to a cold country church, which, from its damps, as regularly transfers its inmates to the churchyard, as a physician consigns his patients to the undertaker; and where one is condemned to hear a fat vicar snore through the litany—"

"Or a half-starved curate," continued Lady Sophia, "extend his sermon to the gaping congregation for the length of an hour; for fear of losing his Sunday's dinner by waking his patron before he had finished his nap."

"Nay," said Emily, pleadingly, "but you know that at Christmas, Hartley Grove was filled by transplantations from your own circles."

"Oh! I'll allow," replied Sophia, "that we did all of us come for one month in the year, out of pity; but that very circumstance must have made the other eleven ten times more dull by the contrast."

"Ay; but then the rest of the year we had assemblies, you know," argued Emily, unwilling to hear a country life cried down quite so furiously.

"Assemblies!" repeated Lady Sophia. "True, with all the dull dowagers to play sixpenny whist; a half-pay captain with a wooden leg the Master of the Ceremonies; a few old bachelors to hobble through dances in the time of the Dead March in Saul, and the prudent Edward Forrester to prose to you between the sets."

"But we had many settlers from the metropolis in our neighborhood," again urged Emily.

"True," cried Lord Orville; "tradesmen and attorneys become rich by their villanous occupation, and retired to the country because a little too modest to spend their customers' and clients' money before their faces. But come, the next quadrille is forming; and, if disengaged, I trust Miss Emily will not refuse to dance with me. Here, Hartley, vis-à-vis us, with my sister;" and they joined the circle of dancers, Lord Orville taking every opportunity, of which the convenient quadrille affords so many, to delight Emily with that conversation, of which he was a perfect master. If there is any thing a man is to be envied for, it is the possession

of that tact and talent, which can carry him through such a conversation upon trifles, as can render them interesting. How many moments of tedium does this faculty save the fortunate possessor.

How miserably awkward have we seen a man, standing by the side of his partner, during the passive part of the quadrille, without exchanging a word with her; or, if she has courage enough to make an attempt at conversation, only answering her with a monosyllable. What a relief to such a man must be the word "L'été," or even "Pastourelle," since it takes from the awkwardness of his silence by setting him in motion; and with what delight must he hear Challoner or Collinet's command for the "grand rond," which puts him so nearly out of his jeopardy.

What a pity that the dancing-master does not exercise the tongue, as well as the feet, of the pupil; or that Hart, or Collinet, or Wieppert, or Mussard, do not accompany the publication of their quadrilles by some little entertaining colloquies that might relieve young ladies and gentlemen from the awkwardness of that total silence, which so often gives to an English dance the solemnity of some religious ceremony, instead of the appearance of hilarity.

Were we dancers, we would, rather than remain silent, get up a conversation; and taking care not to dance with the same partner twice, and to avoid sisters, make it last us through the whole evening.

CHAPTER XII.

AN ABSENT LOVER.

While Hartley and his sister were thus gradually losing the beauty of their simplicity, and merging their natural traits in the factitious characteristics of fashion, Edwin Forrester was pursuing his usual routine duties at Forrester-lodge. The absence of Emily from the country had deprived his occupations of their principal zest. She was no longer there to admire the improvements he contemplated in his park, or to smile her approbation at the happiness of his tenantry. With her presence had fled the principal pleasure of his existence. The hope of seeing her in the evening had hitherto sweetened the hours of the morning; the recollection of her conversation had enlivened his thoughts during the solitude of the night. But she was gone, and he started with alarm at finding how dull every thing appeared in her absence; and how essential her presence was to his existence.

His books became tasteless; music an annoyance; a restlessness, for which he could not account, oppressed him; and twenty times he was on the point of starting for London, that he might either verify the worst of his fears, or ease his heart from the anguish they occasioned, by proving them to be groundless. But he shrunk from the contrast which his plain and rustic manners would present to that of the elegant Orville, who had been his contemporary at Oxford; and dreaded the ridicule which his homely and common sense might draw upon him in the fashionable circles in town. He thought that this contrast would not be felt by Emily so much, while he did not put himself in personal contact with those whom he dreaded as his rivals; he judged that her memory would be more favorable to him than his presence; and determined it to be wiser to trust to her recollection of the hours they had passed together in the country, and of the sincerity of her affection, than to make an awkward exhibition of his rusticity in London.

Uneasy, therefore, as he was, he resolved to remain; and by attending to his active duties as a magistrate and a landlord, attempted to relieve his restlessness, and enliven the tedium of his present existence.

One morning, on inspecting his stud, he found his huntsman more than usually officious, and more than commonly anxious to detain him in the stable. Two or three times he seemed to be on the point of speaking about something besides the horses; but the moment he began, he turned off the sentence into praises of the brown filly, or lamentation over the lameness of the black mare. At length, having literally compelled Forrester to look over the whole stud two or three times, he again hemmed and hawed, and seemed big with some important communication. Forrester turned to him with evident signs of attention; when, again put out of countenance, Thomas launched out about the bay gelding, and indulged himself in a tirade against the farrier, who had put him in physic too soon.

This dissertation finished, Forrester was again departing, when an "Oh, but, sir," from Thomas, again detained him.

"Well, Thomas?"

"Why—sir—you see—that Mrs. Tomkins—Mary, you know, sir—Miss Hartley's maid—"

"Well, what of her?" inquired Forrester, interested about any thing connected with Emily "What of her?" asked he rather impatiently, as Thomas again came to a full stop.

"She certainly has got the glanders, sir, as you say—"

"What, Mrs. Tomkins?"

"God forbid, sir! No; the brown mare."

"Pshaw. But what of Mrs. Tomkins?"

"Why, you know, sir," continued Thomas, more bewildered than ever at the evident interest his master took in the communication, "that she went to Lunnun—that was before her legs were spavined, you know, sir."

"Her legs spavined! Come, Thomas, for once forget your horses, and think of your sweetheart."

Thomas smiled, as he said, "Bless you, sir, what would Lightfoot, and Ranger, and the Filly do, if I did that?"

"Well, but what of Mrs. Tomkins?" earnestly repeated Forrester, who now began to attribute Thomas's backwardness of speech to some hesitation as to what he had to communicate.

"Why, sir, you see she be a scholar, and well educated, seeing as how she can read and write. That mare will have the staggers, now, sir."

"Pish! never mind the mare's staggers."

"But if we don't mind them, you know, sir, they'll carry her off."

But Mrs. Tomkins?" repeated Forrester.

We must blead her in the mouth, and cut her tongue."

"But what of Mrs. Tomkins?" reiterated his master.

"Why, sir, you see, Mary is well trained, and can write a running hand as fast as the filly can gallop. It would do your honour good to see her pothooks and hangers."

"Well, well, never mind her pot-hooks and hangers. I know she is a very nice young woman."

"As nice a creature, sir, as ever carried you over a five-barred gate, or came in at the death, and carried off the tail."

"Well, but what of her, Thomas?"

"Why, your honor—that is—you see—she and I—that is—I and she—had a kind of kindness for one another. Who-a, who-a, Lightfoot—be quiet, Ranger. And she had half promised to be my wife, sir, when she came back.—That Bessy Bedlam, your honor, 's quite a cheat, she's a crib bite, and I can't cure her."

"Well, but Mrs. Tomkins?"

"Oh, she's not like Bessy Bedlam. Well, sir, if it must out, she's writ me a letter."

"A billet doux, I presume," said Forrester, smiling.

"No, your honor, there's no do in it. 'Tis a downright earnest letter, and there it is," taking a piece of paper, crumpled up into the size of a walnut-shell, out of his green plush small clothes.

"Well, but what is the letter to me, Thomas?"

"Oh, nothing, sir, only that there's a kind of message to you in it."

"A message! what, from Miss Hartley?" exclaimed Forrester, with astonishment.

"No, sir, from Mary," said Thomas. "She tells me to give it to you by some side wind, but I was never given to turnings and windings, except turning a hair and winding my horn; and so, sir, I thought it was best to give you the letter itself; and there it is, axing your honor's pardon for crumpling it in my breeches-pocket." And smoothing the letter out with his hand, he presented it to Forrester.

Forrester took the letter with some degree of agitation.

"But, Thomas, is this fair to show me your sweetheart's letter?"

"Oh, sir," replied Thomas, "there be nothing that she or I be ashamed of, sir; it be all fair and aboveboard; I love her, and she loves me, in an honest sort of a way, and we intend to be married —you see, sir—when—when—"

"When what, Thomas?"

"Why, if it must out, sir, we mean to be married when you and Miss Hartley make a match of it."

Forrester started; he felt his face flush, and his heart beat: and, becoming too much agitated to continue the conversation, he opened the letter, when the sight of Mrs. Tomkins's pot-hooks and hangers soon convincing him that it would require some time to decipher the contents, he ordered Thomas to attend him in the library in half an hour; and walked away for the purpose of reading Mary's scrawl, which, with some difficulty, he made out to run as follows:

DEAR TOMMAS,

I dare say by this time you must think I have forgotten you, and all about you, and our true love, and not much wunder if I did, in this here city, or obstropolis, as they calls it, which is nothing more nor less than one great Bedlam, only that the loonyticks are all loose instead of chained up with iron chanes as they are in the Horsepittle. Oh, Tommas, Tommas, what a place this Lunnun is! such rakketting and ricketting;—such settings up and lying in bed; ay, and lying out of it too;—such wickedness and gallyvanting; oh, Tommas, I'm glad you didn't come; you wont therefore be surprised to hear that I have been turned quite topsyturvy, ever since I came (though which is my topsy, or which is my turvey, I cannot tell;) for I am quite bullversey, as Mounseer, Lord Horvil's French varlet, calls it, in his foreign lingo, which is no more like plane English than a pea is like a porridge pot. But bullversey means turned upside down, which I am sure enough. Would you believe it, he calls my mother a mare, and me her filly; and though I have but one father, he swears I have a pair; and then he calls me a moor, and praises my eyes and my mouth, which he calls a yew and bush, and makes French love to me; but you needn't be afraid of him, Tommas, for I set too high a valley on English flesh and blood to think of throwing myself away upon a forriner; and I am quite shamed, so I am, to see so many young ladies bring home husbands from forrin parts, with great whiskers, to have hairs to their estates; no more to compare with their own Englishmen, than Tom Thum is to the Irish giant. Then for the servants, Lord bless me, Tommas, they're as bad as their masters and missuses; such goings on in the stewards' room, and servants' hall; quite as bad as in the drawing-room; I'm sure I only wunder I'm not converted, but I aint; I knows better, and what will be the end of such doings too, as I told lady Sofires own woman yesterday, when I caut—but I won't tell. Then all the fam-de-chambres dresses just like their ladies. They have embezzles and bustles of their own, as big as balloons; bless me 'tis quite stonishing. But now, Tommas, for my pith; I want you to give your master, Mr. Forrester, an nint. Miss Emily is getting quite an atomy; so I must make no more bones, but out with it at once; for I don't like her goings on much more than the rest on em. Ther's Lord Horville, a very nice gentleman no doubt, but a very divil among the wimmen, they say; he is quite like my young lady's shaddy, who is a shaddy herself; now I'am sure he's no better than he should be, because I've heard of one or two of his pranks from Mounseer, and therefore, dear Tommas, I want you some day, when you are currycombing your horses, or giving your so-ho, so-ho, or a blowing o that old horn of yours, that I laff at so; just to give Mr. Forrester an nint to cum up here and look arter his own, or else I'm afeard it won't be his own, and then I'm sure, poor gentleman, he would weep, and wale, and nash his teeth, as they say in the scripter, and well he might. Now, Tommas, do this cleverly

So no more at present, except my love to the dary made. As mounseer would say, ajew, ajew,

MARY TOMKINS.

Much as Forrester was inclined to smile at some parts of this letter, he was too sensibly affected by the conclusion of it, to think of the absurdity of its commencement.

No argument that he could use to himself that this was the mere chit-chat of a silly serving maid, could convince him that she was mistaken. The information was too much in consonance with his own thoughts and fears not to have some foundation in truth. He knew Lord Orville well; and it had required his utmost strength of mind not to give way to the jealous fears that were inspired by the idea that Emily was domesticated in the same house with him.

Then, too, Mrs. Tomkins described her as pale and thin. She was then ill, and he was away from her; she away from every body who loved her sincerely. Who could attend her with the affection and care of her mother? This thought added to the wretchedness which his other ideas had occasioned.

At first he resolved to go with the letter to the Grove, where he was certain to find that both Mr. Hartley and Lady Emily would participate in his feelings, and immediately set off for London; upon second thoughts, however, he determined not to alarm their fears, perhaps unnecessarily; but he found it impossible to remain passively in the country while Emily was either ill or exposed to dangers which she might not have sufficient experience to encounter with safety.

His imagination pictured her as subject to the insidious attentions of Lord Orville, and beset by the persuasions of his mother and sister. Then arose the tormenting comparison between himself and Orville, and the still more terrible recollection of his libertine principles with regard to women; principles that had rendered him notorious at Oxford and which, so far from concealing, he had there been proud to express and to defend.

Lord Orville, too, was not like one of those common coxcombs of the world who become contemptible, from being so much wrapped up in themselves. He had great powers of mind, as well as great elegance of manners; and though his knowledge might be superficial, yet its surface was too brilliant to permit a common or cursory observer to detect its shallowness.

In short, Orville was quite the man to dazzle the imagination and bewilder the mind of an inexperienced young woman; and Forrester knew and acknowledged this inwardly, although he would have openly asserted Emily's mind to be too strong to be so dazzled and bewildered.

He was in this perplexity of thought when Thomas attended him according to his direction in the library. His first care was to desire Thomas to be silent on the subject of his letter, aud to impress upon his mind that there were no reasonable grounds for those fears expressed by Mrs. Tomkins: but as she seemed to hint that Miss Hartley's health was not so good, as when she left the Grove, he told Thomas he was resolved to go to town to ascertain the fact, before he alarmed her family by any report or information of that nature.

On hearing this determination, Thomas became fidgetty; stood first upon one leg, then upon the other, twirled his hat between his finger and his thumb, and made several abortive efforts to speak.

Forrester perceived his embarrassment, and was too well aware of the nature of his feelings not to understand those of his servant.

"What, you want to go to London too, eh, Thomas?

"If your honor has no objection, sir. The horses are all in capital order, and I could just now be very well spared; and I never see'd Lunnun, sir,—if you please."

"But, Thomas, I have no establishment, and if you accompany me I must take you as my valet; and as that is not your situation, you may, perhaps, object."

"Not at all, sir, I'm a little like the signs over the inn-doors, that promise to do well both for man and beast; I understand 'em both, sir, and to take me to Lunnun would be conferring a favor on me, your honor."

"Well, then, tell Atkins to pack up my things; and do you order two pair of post-horses for the travelling chariot to be ready at six, and go to the post-office, and desire them to give the guard of the London mail a crown to order relays all the way up to town. In the mean time I will go to the Grove to see if the family have any commands for Miss Hartley."

Away went Thomas, delighted at having succeeded in his wish; for, in his way, he was quite as fidgetty about "Mounseer," as Mrs. Tomkins called the French "Varlet," as Forrester was about Lord Orville; and made up his mind to give him what he called a good "leathering," provided he found meet occasion, and a good opportunity.

Forrester's incipient doubts were but imaginary; yet few know, what a true thing that is, which is called ideal, so much as a jealous lover; he feels as much pain in his suspicion, as he would experience in the certainty of his misfortune. From his own, he had guessed at Thomas's sentiments, and it was rather a comfort to have a companion for his journey with feelings somewhat akin to his own, instead of the apathetic Mr. Atkins, his usual personal servant.

A fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind."

Having made these arrangements, he rode slowly over to the Grove, where the family were amazingly surprised at his sudden resolution, which he attributed to some unexpected business with his lawyers in London.

A hurried letter, and a thousand blessings and loves, were all these fond parents had time to send their child. Forrester was, over and over again, desired not to be in town an hour without seeking her. A desire which there was not much occasion to repeat so often, to secure its being complied with; and both Mr. Hartley and Lady Emily, anticipated the delight with which she would receive her old and valued friend; while Forrester heartily wished that he might find it so. As they expressed these anticipations, however, the pleasure his presence was expected to create, a misgiving doubt agonized his mind, which he used his utmost exertion to

banish; and, assuming an appearance of ease which he was far from feeling, he quitted the Grove, galloped home to the lodge, and in an hour was on the road to London, with Thomas by his side, travelling as fast as four post-horses, from the George, could lay their legs to the ground.

Neither of our travellers had very pleasant thoughts by way of companions. The uneasy and anxious meditations, which jealous doubts create in minds, where such feelings have hitherto been strangers, were calculated for any thing, rather than to lessen the tedium of their journey. Anticipations of evil filled Forrester's mind, and seemed to lengthen every mile of his wearisome journey to the metropolis.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ARRIVAL.

To a man who loves and enjoys the quiet freedom of the country, and to whom nature in every variety presents a beauty, who derives as much pleasure from the clear frosty morning, when the frozen dew sparkles in a thousand glittering gem-like drops on the heath-clad common, as he does from the mild morning of summer, when the flowers pour forth their fragrance in the fulness of their bloom, and the birds their melodies in the plenitude of their joy; who delights in a vigorous gallop over the downs, or a sauntering walk in some sequestered glen: and whose principal pleasure consists in these enjoyments, and the freedom of a country life, the prospect of a crowded city affords any anticipation rather than that of pleasure.

It was thus with Edward Forrester; who threw himself back in his carriage with disgust, as the gas lamps, crowded streets, and rattling stones announced his arrival in the metropolis on the second night of his departure from——. Forrester's only visits to London had been his occasional trips from Oxford, and in the first season after his leaving college. At that time he passed a couple of months there, with Lord Orville, and some other of his Oxford companions, who had quitted the banks of the Isis at the same period. There was, however, a natural diffidence in Forrester, that unfitted him for general society. His manners always wore the appearance of restraint; the confidence of the women abashed him; and the *libertinage*, and freedom of men, were not at all consonant to his own ideas either of pleasure or propriety. He felt the qualities, which he knew he possessed, to be lost in the vortex of animal gayety, by which he was surrounded; and soon finding himself entirely out of his element, he quitted the gay throng; and, seeking more congenial scenes, and a more worthy occupation of his time, in the cultivation of his paternal property, which was large; and in the pursuit of those studies, commenced at Oxford; he became at twenty-three a country gentleman.

His acquaintance with the Hartleys, together with several other high and respectable families in his own neighborhood, left him nothing to regret on the score of society. His duties as a country gentleman and as a magistrate, gave him plenty of useful occupation for his time; and the growing beauties of Miss Emily Hartley, at length attracting his attention, and making a deep impression on his heart, left him nothing in the world to wish, but the completion of his union with her; a consummation, that the evident encouragement of Mr. and Lady Emily Hartley, who saw and appreciated his worth, together with the warm friendship and growing attachment of the young lady, who was not insensible to it, gave him every reasonable hope of not being far distant.

His whole journey had been one of restless anxiety and uneasy anticipation; he imagined a thousand things which his better judgment convinced him could not be, and as he approached the metropolis his heart grew sick with apprehension. As to honest Thomas, although his feelings arose from precisely the same source as those of his sensitive master, they seemed only to agitate his fingers' ends. Whenever the idea of "Mounseer" crossed his mind, his open hands closed into fists: the eyes of the Frenchman became, in his imagination of "rainbow tint," and hits, right and left, were planted upon the unfortunate person of the French valet by anticipation. So strong was this impression on his mind, that once, while asleep, and we presume, dreaming of Mrs. Tomkins and his rival, he put himself into a boxing attitude, and with one hand, had nearly knocked off his master's travelling cap, while with the other he dashed through the carriage window, to the great discomfiture of his knuckles, which were considerably cut by the glass which he had demolished.

The appearance of London, however, which had disgusted Forrester, and brought to his mind, with tenfold force, the fears with which he was oppressed, produced quite a different effect upon poor Thomas. Dazzled by the lights, bewildered by the people, he stared with an intensity that would have made one suppose he was looking out for the golden pavement, with which countrymen have proverbially covered the streets of the metropolis. The Frenchman, his jealousy and anger, and even Mary Tomkins herself, seemed to have quitted his memory, as he gazed in stupid astonishment, at the crowded and lighted streets.

Forrester's arrival happened on one of the nights upon which Lady Orville was at home, to about five hundred of her friends; ecarte, whist, and other games occupied some of the elders of the assembly; while quadrilles, conversation, music, and flirting were quite on the qui vive in the other apartments.

Lady Sophia, as usual, had taken care to occupy Hartley; as it was one of the schemes of Lady Orville so to *afficher* his attention to her daughter in public, as to give her an apology for requiring that kind of explanation, from which so few young men escape from an experienced woman, without making a proposal of which they had no intention at the commencement of the explanation.

As it was one of the plans of Lady Orville to make the conduct of Hartley to Lady Sophia as public as possible, so was it a scheme of Lord Orville's, without any positive intention of marriage, to make his attentions to Emily sufficiently

visible to the world for him to be set down as her accepted lover, and to prevent the intrusion of others.

Orville felt the prudence of his mother's schemes, but he had unfortunately seen too much of married life and married women, to take the yoke upon himself without much deliberation; and convenient as he acknowledged to himself it would be, to enjoy such a fortune as that which Miss Hartley would probably possess, together with the influence of her family, yet matrimony was too bitter a pill to be gilded over by these advantages, to one who had so little regard to its sacred institution as Orville. He valued his freedom too highly to sacrifice it easily; and though married life, in a certain class of society, can scarcely he said to bring that thraldom upon a husband which it does in the inferior orders, or indeed to impose any very great restriction upon their conduct; yet there is a certain sense of placing one's honor in the keeping of another, which renders it nearly impossible for a husband to be guilty of any dereliction, without having a natural fear that perhaps his conduct to others may be returned in kind.

Attracted, however, by the beauty of Emily, he could not resist paying her the attentions which his mother prescribed; but these were accompanied by no fixed motives. Sometimes he canvassed the propriety of making her his wife; and sometimes, as his knowledge of woman's nature made him see how agreeable his attentions were, and how excitable was every emotion of her susceptible heart, he almost conceived hopes of another nature. In this undecided state of mind, uncertain of his own purpose, he pursued the course of *affichéing* his attentions; and succeeded in the unworthy motive of making the world suppose that they were agreeable to Emily, and that he was the happy object of her affections.

On this night Lord Orville had been more particular than ever in his attentions to Emily. Some of his companions had rallied him as a lost man, others had congratulated him as a happy one. Some swore that he was going into the leading strings of matrimony, while those who knew him better, trembled for the happiness of the object of such marked attentions from such a man.

Emily had scarcely danced with any one else the whole evening. She had received all the compliments with which the dazzling beauty of her appearance had been greeted, with indifference; but she lent an attentive ear to the insidious, the brilliant conversation of Orville. The continent, its manners, and its literature had been the principal subject on which they had conversed. Its freedom had been extolled, and all the worst sentiments of Rousseau, Voltaire, the Crebillons, and the whole set of those who have devoted so much wit to undermine principle, had been pressed into the conversation of Lord Orville, as though they were his own. Dazzled by the brilliancy of his arguments, she did not perceive their sophistry; and entertained by the novelty of his propositions and assertions, she did not take time to ascertain their correctness, or to detect their falsehood.

In the midst of one of their conversations, a lady who was leaning over the back of the sofa, exclaimed, "Bless me, Miss Hartley, who is that grave-looking gentleman, watching you with such anxious looks?"

Emily and Lord Orville both looked up at the same moment, and both started at perceiving Forrester standing a very few paces from them, and watching them with evident anxiety.

Emily blushed as she saw him, and though the full tide of the remembrance of home rushed upon her heart, at the sight of one so nearly connected with all the scenes of her early years; yet these feelings experienced a total revulsion as she recollected Lord Orville's presence. The moment that he saw himself perceived, Forrester advanced. His heart leaped with joy as he caught the glance of recognition and pleasure with which her countenance beamed at the first sight of him: but was repressed with agony at the cold reception which he met with on his advance. The fact was, that at the very moment she was holding out her hand in the full remembrance of her home, and of her former sentiments for Forrester, Emily caught Lord Orville's eye fixed upon her, with a scrutinizing glance, in which a satiric smile was mingled with an appearance of intense anxiety. This, in a moment, prevented any exhibition of natural feeling; and Forrester's first greeting with the woman in whose hands he had placed the whole happiness of his life, was passed in a few formal inquiries about her family and the Grove.

Directly that Orville saw he had sufficient influence over Emily thus to regulate her reception of Forrester within the bounds of mere polite recognition, he greeted him warmly as an old Oxonian.

"What, my old friend Forrester?" said he; "I am delighted to see you among us again; why, man, I was afraid you had buried yourself amid the groves of your estate; and really never expected to hear of you again, excepting through the medium of an epitaph. But what in the name of wonder has brought you here, while I thought you were as deeply rooted at Forrester Lodge as one of its old and respectable oaks."

"And I am afraid, Lord Orville, that I shall bear transplanting quite as badly as one of those very oaks you speak of, for I feel that they would not be much more misplaced here, than there master," replied Forrester.

"Quite as modest as ever—I see. But, my dear Forrester, how will the country get on without you? Surely, the Bench of country Justices will stop in their progress for want of their oracle! and we shall have nothing but appeals against their convictions and commitments at all the Sessions in the country."

"Your Lordship is either pleased to be satirical, or to overrate my humble exertions among the Magistracy," replied Forrester, gravely.

"Nay, my dear Forrester; I see you are as matter-of-fact as ever, and cannot, for the life of you, understand a little raillery. But come, here are plenty of our old Christchurch fellows, who will be delighted to see you in London."

So saying, and feeling the necessity of getting him away from Emily while the feelings of his first appearance were still fresh, and before the dormant sentiments of her heart were awakened by his presence, he led Forrester away to Langley,

who stood surrounded by a host of old Oxonians who, leaving some dozens of young ladies to sit as wall-flowers, and sigh, in vain, for partners, were enjoying the brilliancy of his conversation. Forrester was received with hearty greetings by all his old companions; but nothing gave him more pleasure than the renewal of his old acquaintance with Langley. He was quite aware of the change in his prospects, and the moment he had heard of it had invited him to the Lodge; in the hope of his being able to hit upon some plan, which might relieve the bitterness of his disappointment.

Langley, on his part, returned the warm pressure of his friend's hand; and, though a slight blush rose upon his countenance, as he remembered how differently he was circumstanced when they last met, the feeling soon passed away in the gratitude with which he recollected Forrester's kind invitation on the occasion, and which his marriage had been the sole reason of his declining.

"Why, Langley, your wit seems to possess the power of Orpheus," exclaimed Orville, "for you have literally given animation to Forrester; who, till he heard your voice, was silent as one of his own trees; or, perhaps, like the statue of Memnon, he requires the sun of wit to shine upon him before he condescends to utter a sound. However, we are really glad to see you here, Forrester, once more in civilized society."

"You do me honor," said Forrester, to whom this raillery gave absolute pain; "but I fear I shall make but a contemptible addition to a society where gayety and wit preside;" and he recollected with agony that it was only love and fear that drove him into its vortex.

"Why, Forrester, you look melancholy; what, already forgetting your shady groves! or, perhaps, some rustic love left behind in the country. Some intended Mrs. Forrester, the future Lady Bountiful of your estate? The prospective maker of potions, and distributor of coals, soup, and blankets to your tenantry, eh?"

"No; I have left none behind me to regret," said Forrester, laying almost unconsciously a peculiar emphasis on the word "behind," and he internally breathed a heartfelt wish that he had done so.

"Ah, Forrester, you are a sly fellow: no wonder nature had such delights for you, while she displayed herself in such charms as Miss Emily Hartley possesses."

The name grated on his ear when pronounced by Orville; and his heart shrunk from an allusion which seemed to hint that his passion was not unknown to the gay peer. He, however, rallied himself sufficiently to say,

"Miss Hartley is, indeed, one of the fairest specimens of nature's workmanship, both in person and mind."

"Why, you praise her with the cold science of a connoiseur, and the frigidity of a stoical philosopher," said Orville; "we, in our regions are not content with such frozen praise of a beauty, who has created the greatest sensation of the season. She is our reigning toast; isn't she?" and the circle nodded assent. "There is not a heart left among us since her appearance—is there?" and again a general assent was given. "She is, indeed, charming. Her eyes are of the celestial blue, which Michael Angelo has chosen for his Madonna, while her form might have served for the model which has enabled Canova to emulate the sculptor of the Medician Venus."

The heart of Forrester sickened as he heard these praises of Emily from the lips of Orville. His own sensitive passion was of too delicate a nature to indulge in the praise of its object to indifferent persons; and he considered Emily as a subjet too sacred for such a public discussion of her merits. He shrunk from her beauties being thus canvassed by a set of young men, who, perhaps, only looked upon her charms with the eyes of libertines; and, alarmed and disgusted, he retired from the circle, thinking to seek a temporary retirement, and to lose a sense of his pain in the thickest of the crowd.

This was unlike Orville's general conduct; but he knew the sensitive disposition of Forrester well, and was aware that nothing was so likely to drive him back again into the country as a perpetual system of badinage.

He was perfectly aware that Emily's heart had not yet been so entirely deadened to her former predilections, but that the sight of Forrester might revive the tenderness of their remembrance. These feelings were as yet only stifled, not eradicated, by the bustle and excitement in which she lived.

He determined, therefore, to drive him from the field by ridicule, which should lower him in the estimation of Emily. and alarm him by the display of the power of her charms and the number of rivals with whom he would have to contend. Orville likewise derived an additional zest to his pursuit in the idea of successfully rivalling one whose conduct and philosophy was such a complete satire upon his own system. Forrester watched Emily at a distance the whole evening, and saw, with a pain which he vainly attempted to banish from his heart, that her hand was sought for every dance by the gayest and highest persons in the room; and between these and himself he could not refrain from drawing comparisons by no means favorable to his own pretensions. Tired of a scene, the gayety of which was such a contrast to his own thoughts and feelings, and in the midst of which he felt like some wandering and uneasy spirit, he quitted the rooms in disgust; but not without having been subjected to the blandishment of the elegant hostess, who only added to his pain by the display of her irresistible manners. Forrester drove to his hotel more than half confirmed in the truth of his fears, and throwing himself dressed upon his bed, he gave way to the agonies of his soul at the idea of losing one whom he had hitherto looked upon as his own. He recollected, however, that he had, as yet, seen her only in the midst of a gay and giddy crowd, where the perpetual attentions she received made her no longer mistress of her own actions. He hoped, therefore, that in the quiet of the morning he might find her still the same unsophisticated girl she had quitted the country; he began to blame himself for judging too hastily, and reflected that a crowded party was not the place for him to have sought a first interview, or a proper opportunity for Emily to have displayed her real pleasure at his presence. With reflections such as these he contrived at length to quiet his mind and heart

although he envied the glee with which Thomas boasted of the little success of his French rival, and of the complete "set down" which he had given Mounseer.

In the mean time, every attempt was made on the part of Lord Orville and his family to prevent any effect being produced upon their plans by the sudden appearance of Forrester. His mauvaise honte was descanted upon; the country determined as his proper sphere, and his quick disappearance from the party made use of as an argument against him; till, half forgetting all her former ideas of his excellence, Emily became ashamed of defending her old friend, and partly influenced by the opinions of those about her.

Lady Orville was, however, alarmed lest the visit of Forrester should throw difficulties in the way of the accomplishment of her plans. She dreaded his strong common sense, and the representations he might make of what he might observe as to the dissipations of Orville House, which were of a character quite sufficient to alarm a less tender and tenacious mother than Lady Emily Hartley; while she doubted whether either Emily or Hartley were sufficiently impressed with the opinion she wished them to entertain of Lord Orville and his sister, to make them for a moment hesitate in obeying the slightest of her wishes. There was also something about Forrester himself, that in spite of her ridicule, inspired her with a degree of respect that she very seldom felt for any of his sex; and she was not quite so given up to the follies and vices of those among whom she had so long existed, as to be insensible to the power such a man might have over a woman's heart.

Divested of the tinsel of brilliant manners, outward accomplishments, and fashionable coxcombry, she could not but acknowledge the inferiority of the generality of those men by whom her parties were filled, to the unassuming Forrester; and felt, in the sentiments which he had inspired in her own breast, a much more formidable rival to her son, than that young peer, in his own self-sufficiency, would acknowledge in a mere worthy country gentleman.

Anxious upon this point, she took the opportunity of the close of the party of urging the point with Lord Orville; and taking his arm to her dressing-room, "Orville," said she, "I am anxious to know how you succeed with Emily."

"Admirably! I think we have quite annihilated any little chance that Forrester might have had of remaining in possession of her heart;" replied Orville, in that tone of careless coxcombry with which he generally addressed a mother who had inspired him with so little respect.

Lady Orville shook her head, then musing for a moment, "But your marriage with her?"

"That, madam, is not quite resolved on."

"I know very well, Orville, that you have not absolutely asked the question—But then"——

"O, pardon me, madam, I do not apprehend any objection on her part," interrupted he, with self-sufficiency.

"What then? my son."

"Why, I have not at all made up MY mind on the subject of *marriage!*"

"How?—why, Orville—you wouldn't?"——

"That I don't know, ma'am."

"But what can you want in a wife that Miss Emily Hartley does not possess?" asked Lady Orville. "Her beauty"——

"Is exquisite, I allow," said Orville; "enough so for a mistress, too much so perhaps for a wife;" interrupted Orville, as he took a pinch of snuff.

"What," asked Lady Orville, "is not beauty one of your requisites in a wife?"

"In a neighbor's—a friend's—yes, ma'am; in one's own—'tis a difficult matter to solve, and I have not quite made up my mind;" replied Orville, with that appearance of coxcombry which he so well knew how to assume.

"But then, her immense fortune—the influence of her family, and my wishes?" pursued Lady Orville.

"These are certainly arguments in her favor—particularly the latter." This was said with a drawling and rather a satirical tone, at which Lady Orville bit her lip. "But you know I am somewhat of a roving disposition, and I am not quite certain that I should flirt with so much freedom with other men's wives abroad, while I thought there was one with whom my *friends* might think proper to return the compliment at home."

Lady Orville again bit her lip, indignantly. There was a want of filial respect in the expression of such sentiments which she felt bitterly, and yet dared not reprove, lest the altercation might produce observations that she dared not court, and could meet only with anger.

With a forced smile, therefore, she faintly said, "Orville, you are incorrigible; but do not throw away the golden harvest I have prepared for you, and pray let it be a double marriage. Good night!" and she hastily retreated into her dressing-room to hide the bitter and indignant feelings excited by his disrespect. Feeling doubly painful from the conviction that her conduct had afforded but too much apology for such treatment. Orville bowed lowly as the dressing-room door shut him from her sight; and as he crossed the vestibule, he half thought and half soliloquized: "A double-marriage, my Lady mother seems to be of the same opinion with he, who thought it some consolation to be hanged in company."—Then humming an Italian air, he entered the private unblazoned carriage in which his secret expeditions were generally undertaken, and drove to ——— Square, the worthy son of such a mother!

CHAPTER XIV.

CONTRAST.

LADY ORVILLE had truly described herself as a busy woman, in the midst of a busy world—for her plots and intrigues were so numerous, embraced so many objects, and diverged into so many ramifications, that her active mind was for ever on the stretch of full employment. With that influence, however, which she derived from the adventitious circumstance of rank and fortune, what a vast deal of real good might not have been emanated from a

mind possessed of so much energy; but the gratification of one early bias—the being overpowered by one youthful passion, occasioning a first dereliction from moral principle, turned her from good to evil. Instead of retracing her steps—instead of regaining the position she had lost in her own opinion, she thought only of the preservation of that of others; certain, that as long as she succeeded in this object, in a worldly sense, she was secure. Lady Orville had early loved with that passionate fondness which women of her temperament only know. The feeling had been excited by a man well calculated to give an ingenuous woman a notion of the perfection of human nature, as far as person and accomplishments were concerned. He had been struck by her peculiar style of beauty—her raven tresses—her dark eye, changing in its color and brightness with the varying sentiments of her soul—her form, growing, with her mind, into premature and precocious womanhood, were all calculated to ignite the uncontrolled passions of a libertine; and such, indeed, in the full extent of the word, was the man upon whom Lady Cecilia Devereux had fixed the first passionate feelings of her young heart.

Almost domesticated together, from the near connection existing between their different families; every opportunity was afforded to Arlington to cultivate and increase the growing passion, of which, young as he was, his experience in woman soon made him sensible. Deluded by his attentions, Cecilia, on her part, never avoided him; she was too proud to imagine for a moment that any man could have other intentions towards a woman of her rank than those of marriage; she felt that she loved him with her whole soul, and, unused to curb her inclinations, or to restrain her caprice, she gave herself up to the society of one, who, to use her own words, had first called her heart and its feelings into existence.

Lady Cecilia had heard and read of seduction and desertion; and, with the rest of her sex, had shuddered at and vituperated the villanies of men. But she thought these circumstances only took place with inferior orders of women, and never imagined any man, however presumptuous, would for a moment contemplate, or even be guilty of, such conduct towards herself.

Her insidious love encouraged this self-security, at the same time that Arlington fed the high passions which endangered it by every means in his power. Delicate sentiments, subversive of moral principles, were inculcated; a style of reading which effectually, though gradually, undermines a strict sense and respect for virtue, was introduced; and Lady Cecilia only awakened from her delirium to find herself one of those seduced and deserted beings which she supposed to belong only to a different order of society; and the victim of one of those men whose conduct she had vituperated, and whose power she had despised.

When she first discovered that Arlington never intended to make her his wife, or at least had changed his purpose, her proud heart could scarcely refrain from taking such a vengeance upon her betrayer, as would have exposed herself and ruined her name for ever. Her only confidant, however, had sufficient prudence to regulate the violence of passion, so as to secure the preservation of her fame. This lady, entreating, and succeeding in procuring, Arlington's temporary absence; urged the immediate acceptance of the old Earl of Orville, who had long been a suitor to Lady Cecilia, as a husband. Smothering all the indignation to which Arlington had transformed her love, and determining still on some future and signal revenge, she saw, as the violence of her feeling subsided, the necessity as well as the prudence of silencing any thing like an invidious report. The old Earl was therefore accepted, the marriage hastened, and the remembrance, or at least the effects, of Cecilia's early crime, concealed beneath the blazonry of a coronet.

Her mind, however, had been essentially perverted. Her naturally violent passions, once let loose, burst through the floodgates of reason and restraint, and carried her impetuously along in their wild career. She soon heartily despised a husband who submitted to all her dictates with the obedience of a dotard; she considered his name the only valuable appendage of her marriage, and used his authority only as a cloak to cover her excesses, and to preserve her caste in that society, where she was still received and courted, from the convenient opinion of "a blot being no blot till it is hit." Her beauty made her attractive to the men, and her wit rendered her formidable to the women; so that, through admiration on the one side, and fear on the other, the Countess of Orville had led a splendid career; till time, lowering the influence of some passions, and heightening that of others, had made her as ambitious of power as she had formerly been of pleasure.

In several instances Lady Orville had so far overstepped the prescribed bounds, that none other but herself would probably have been able to have preserved her station; but she knew the world well, and the effect of these instances was immediately obliterated by some splendid fete, more brilliant than that which had gone before. Orville House was a delightful mansion for the dissipated, and the many shut their eyes, or closed their ears to the rumors of frailties, of which there were no flagrant proofs to substantiate the correctness, rather than debar themselves from the convenience and pleasure of visiting Orville House.

There was a certain set, however, whom Lady Orville, with all her arts, could never tempt within her doors; and into whose circle she could never, with all her talents and brilliant powers of entertainment, gain admittance with any degree of intimacy. These were not those who deemed themselves exclusives, merely from the circumstance of elevated rank and fashion; but who set a higher value on an untarnished name, than upon either of these adventitious claims to distinction; and who would not permit their daughters to visit or to be seen in any mansion where scandal had been busy with the name of its mistress. In spite of the sway and influence she held in the fashionable world, and which made her the envy of two-thirds of her numerous acquaintance, this exclusion from the most select, though perhaps not the highest in rank, imbittered many hours of Lady Orville's existence: for, with all the bravado with which, in her letters to her *divorcée* friend, she treated the opinions and ceremonies of the world, and of society; and in spite of the contempt with which she chose to treat

them in her correspondence, or in the immediate circle of her intimates, where a mask was no longer necessary, there was no person more sensitive to, or who shrunk with more horror and dismay from the effects of any rumor that would have imparted to herself the slightest dereliction from the established rules of society. Neither was there any person who visited the *discovered* derelictions of her friends with more severity than Lady Orville.

Lady Orville has already mentioned her intention of inviting to Orville House, on his arrival from India, her cousin, Admiral Frankley, who was immensely rich, and whose wealth the Countess had determined should be distributed in her family. To ensure this. it was necessary to keep from him a niece, the daughter of a beloved sister whom he had treated harshly on account of her marriage, and to whom, from sheer repentance, he was very likely to leave the whole of his fortune.

A long and arduous professional life at sea had only permitted Admiral Frankley to see his cousin, the Countess, occasionally when on shore, and during these visits he had been charmed by the open, hearty manner in which he had been greeted, and by the welcome with which he had been received. Now, therefore, that he had retired from active service, he gladly embraced the proposition of remaining at Orville House until he had completed an establishment of his own.

The previous visits, however, of the gallant admiral had never been made during the height of the London season; and arriving before Lady Orville expected, or was prepared for him, he had no idea of the life into which he was so suddenly introduced, and by which his head was literally bewildered.

The perpetual parties, the incessant occupation of the knocker, and the continued hurry of party after party, made him think every body mad, and he began to fear they would drive him so likewise. As to the routs; he would rather have fought an enemy's seventy four, or sailed through the Dardanelles, under the fire of the batteries, than have encountered the noise and confusion which attended them; and it was with some difficulty that by closing his doors he excluded the noise attendant upon them.

Warm in his temper, as the climate in which he had passed so great a portion of his life, he was as unable to control the passion into which he was thrown by what he called the d——d follies of the people around him, as he was to get rid of his sea habits, and assimilate his pursuits to those of Lady Orville and her family. But if there was the violence, there was also the generosity of the sailor. If there was the roughness of the element on which he had passed his life, there was an excellence of heart that compensated for all his foibles. Brave as a lion, he was gentle as a lamb to the leadings of affection; and the only thing which he swore he never could nor would forgive was that want of sincerity, which he technically called fighting under false colors.

One may easily imagine such a character very much misplaced in an establishment where the whole system was one universal deception, where all was one scene of social fraud, from the blandishments of the mistress down to the civility of the servants But that which annoyed him more than any thing, was his being denied to his friends by the porter.

Some short time after his arrival he burst into the boudoir of the Countess, quite in a phrensy of passion, and indulged himself in a pretty round oath or two against the porter of the establishment.

"Come, my dear Admiral," exclaimed the Countess, who was determined to humanize him, as she called it, if possible; you know you have promised me to give up this odious sea habit of swearing."

"D—— it, my lady cousin, a'n't I breaking myself of it as fast as I can," retorted the Admiral; "and if your ladyship, and your people, would break yourself of your odious land habit of lying, I should not have so much occasion for my sea habit of swearing."

"Lying, my dear Admiral?"

"Lying, yes lying, my lady cousin. Have not I just heard of my old messmate, Jack Martin, hoisting the lion's head signal at your door for me yesterday, and that your jackanapes of a porter told him 'not at home.' D——, well I wont swear, but I really believe that fellow is wound up by your ladyship in the morning, and lies by clockwork all the day."

"Nay, my dear Admiral, that is no lie," replied her ladyship.

"No lie—but it isn't the truth tho', and ——, no I won't swear; but curse me if I know any thing so like a lie as that which is just the contrary to the truth," retorted the admiral.

"But, my dear Admiral, this is one of the white lies which is rendered necessary by the present state of society," said Lady Orville.

"Then society must be in a——, well, well, in a very bad state, to require such a system," reiterated the admiral.

"But, after all what does it signify, my dear Admiral, whether you saw the poor Lieutenant or not?" asked Lady Orville.

"D—— it, madam, I beg your pardon for swearing, but that Admiral ought to be ——," here Lady Orville made a sign, "well, well, I wont swear, but that Admiral ought to be——, you know what I mean, who could bear to shut the port-hole of his house in the face of that messmate on shore, who had boldly stood the brunt of an enemy's fire at sea."

"Well, well, Admiral, only favor me with a list of the persons to whom you wish to be at home."

"At home!" exclaimed the Admiral, interrupting her, "I am at home to the whole world. As I have faced my enemies abroad, I can face my friends at home. I never make promises I don't mean to fulfil, nor contract debts I don't mean to pay. Nor is there a face I'm ashamed to see in the world, excepting the unblushing one of a modern fine Lady, or the effeminate one of what you call an exquisite."

"But then you know," said Lady Orville, in her sweetest voice, "to persons of our rank, there are so many applications for charity, relief, and one nonsense or another."

"Then the least we can do," again interrupted the Admiral, "is to see the applicants ourselves, that if we can't relieve their wants, the kindness of our refusal may soften their disappointment,

and not leave them to suppose our hearts as hard as our door, from the surliness of the porter who shuts it in their face."

"But, my dear Admiral, there are some troublesome visiters, who, without such a regulation as this would be always intruding themselves into our drawing-rooms."

"I know there are," rejoined the Admiral; "there are your young puppies with their waspish waists and empty pates, who set themselves up for men, while the razor makes voyages of discovery on their chin, without being able to find a hair. These I would bow out of the door, and send back to their boarding-schools. Then there are your mustached and whiskered foreigners, who, with their tweedle dum and tweedle dee, give themselves the airs of princes, set young women mad, and ruin our native fiddlers. These I would kick out the window."

"Well, but my dear Admiral—"

"And well, but my dear lady cousin; who knows, I say, but that my poor lost niece may find out her hard-hearted uncle, and one day knock at the door, and he turned adrift upon the wide and pitiless ocean of life, without a pilot or a rudder, through one of these cursed white lies of 'not at home.'"

"Ah, Admiral," said Lady Orville, with a sigh, "I am afraid your hopes of discovering your niece are futile. It is now two years since her father failed."

"Ha—that rascal to marry my poor sister under false colors, and against my father's consent, and then to hide her and her child from me in their poverty."

"Ay, ay, I always predicted how it would end; merchant's wives, indeed, setting up to vie with their betters," exclaimed Lady Orville.

"Betters, Lady Orville! the wife of a British merchant has no betters; she sits like the figure of Britannia in the corner of a seachart, with the horn of plenty in her hand, and the four quarters of the globe pouring out their riches at her feet. Nor is there any one more entitled to the enjoyment of luxuries himself, than the merchant, who risks his fortune to procure them for others."

"Excepting the sailor, who fights for their preservation, my dear Admiral," interrupted Lady Orville, in her most insinuating tones of flattery; "I think you will allow that."

"Eh, what? Egad, you are right," chuckled the Admiral. "Yes, certainly, the sailor—Egad, my lady cousin, you are a very sensible woman, when you suffer your heart to speak instead of your education—yes, yes, those who fight for them, indeed; d—— it, that's a good speech, cousin Orville—and one may swear at what one hears so seldom."

Lady Orville smiled at the effect of a little flattery, even upon the rude nature of the rough and honest seaman; and the idea passed through her mind, that human nature was the same in every class of society; and that flattery, properly administered, was a dose suited to every palate. It is the difference of the seasoning, thought she, and its influence is the same over all mankind.

"But, my lady, this niece of mine; have you yet learned any intelligence of her?" anxiously asked the Admiral.

Lady Orville thought this a good opportunity to strike a blow, which she had long meditated, at the claims of this niece, whom she considered the only obstacle to her certainty of the Admiral's fortune.

"Why, Admiral," said she, musing, and speaking with apparent unwillingness, "to be candid with you——but now it will give you pain."

"Speak out, my lady, speak out, never mince the matter; if you have got any thing to say, say it."

"But really, my dear Admiral, it grieves me to utter any thing that may give you pain;" and Lady Orville again hesitated.

"Fire away, my lady—speak—never mind me."

"Why then, Admiral," continued the Countess, "you know in our inquiries about your sister's child, we traced her and her father to Devonshire."

"Well, I know it," said the Admiral, anxiously.

"On his death (this is the painful part of the intelligence), we could hear nothing farther of your niece, than that she had suddenly quitted the place, in company with a young gentleman, nearly a stranger, but who had been very assiduous in his attention to her for some few weeks previous to the old gentleman's death; and they do say, but the world is always very scandalous, that her conduct with regard to this young gentleman hastened that melancholy event."

"It's a lie. It's a ——, but I won't swear—but I'm sure it's a lie. What, the daughter of my sister Fanny. ——, I won't believe it."

"I would not give credence to it at first. Indeed I am very unwilling to believe it now; but there was, I am afraid, intelligence too positive to be doubted," continued Lady Orville; "and it has been this that has made us all so backward in talking on the subject."

"I'm thunderstruck!" exclaimed the Admiral, who, independently of the impossibility of his suspecting Lady Orville of any other falsehood than one of her harmless white lies, was always too ready to give credence to every thing he heard; "I'm thunderstruck! a daughter of my sister Fanny! But who is the villain? I'll hunt him through the world! I'll have him hanged at the yard-arm; I'll blow him to atoms at the muzzle of a four-and-twenty-pounder. I'll—oh, my poor sister! I am glad she did not live to see it. But, my lady, are you sure; are you certain?"

"We will send for those from whom we have gained our information, my dear Admiral, and you shall judge for yourself; perhaps you may detect something that may throw a doubt upon our surmises."

"I'm sure I shall. Send directly," exclaimed the agitated Admiral; "send for them directly, my Lady; and I'll cut their tongues out if I find that they have lied."

"Nay, nay, my dear Admiral, calm yourself; and I will, in the mean time, send after the people from whom this information has been obtained."

At this moment Langley was announced, as being in the drawing-room. He having promised to convoy the Admiral as he called it, through the new streets of the metropolis.

"Hush, my Lady; not a word before him. Though I like this fellow too, for he rescued me from those rackety young fellows; but he always appears to me scudding under false colors; hanging out smiles, and having nothing but sighs and tears abroad. Well, well, you've shocked me. I'll be ——, well, I won't swear—no, I won't—I'll forget the unworthy slut. No, I can't. When she'd such an uncle too! But she did not know that; however, never mind. My Lady, your hand;" and he handed Lady Orville from her boudoir to the drawing-room, with all the punctilio of the old school.

Lady Orville congratulated herself on the success of this hint, upon which she built her hopes of driving his niece entirely from his mind. The great difficulty was, what to do with the Admiral, so as to blind him to all her other intrigues and manœuvrings; and being afraid to leave him much to his own observation, all she could do was to find employment and amusement for him.

To expect more than common attention to the old gentleman, from a son and daughter, who, with no very great degree of filial respect for their mother, had all their own schemes of pleasure to attend to, she knew was useless; she had therefore pressed two or three of the young danglers about Orville House into the service, and who were only too happy to oblige the gay Countess, to act as cicisboes to the old Admiral, who could do very well as long as he was not left alone. Among these Langley was the foremost, and generally the most constant. He had first met the old Admiral at the opera, where he had inadvertently wandered into the *coulisses;* but, astounded and bewildered by the exhibition he there witnessed, he thought Bedlam had been let loose, and not being able to find his way back to the front of the house, had been misdirected by some roguish sparks, into a passage which led him under the stage, where Langley, attracted by his lusty, "yeo-ho's," and "avasts," found him in the dark, grappling, as he called it, with a trap-door, not knowing which way to turn himself; and half-frightened out of his senses at the hubbub of the machinery, which he said, "made such an infernal noise down in that d—d cockpit."

They afterward met at Orville House, and it being among Langley's numerous plans, to make some use of the interest of that family, which had been most profusely promised by the young Earl, he did every thing to keep in favor with the Countess. Finding, therefore, that paying court to the old Admiral was a very acceptable, as well as not an unpleasant mode of accomplishing his end, an intimacy was established between them, which proved agreeable to both.

The Admiral thought him a good fellow, and hearing from the Countess of his misfortunes, he wished that he had been brought up to the navy, that he might have got him promoted.

This Langley set down to the score of his usual ill-luck; here he had made a friend, and a powerful one, but unfortunately his power and influence lay in a direction where it could be of no utility to him. He could be of no use at the Admiralty; he was too old to commence the service as a mid.

Admiral Frankley had been so long used to command, and to be implicitly obeyed at sea, that he could not help exerting the same authority on shore.

Like many others, he had his hobby-horse or mania. It was, however, an amiable one, since it consisted in an attempt at making people happy. It is true that, like many others, he wished to accomplish his end in his own way rather than in theirs. Although unmarried, and generally railing against the holy estate of matrimony, no old maid had a greater inclination to match-making than himself; he delighted in discovering an attachment, and prided himself in accelerating an éclaircissement. In this pursuit, however, he was far from being very successful; for, once imbibing a notion that two people were attached to each other, it was with great difficulty that he could believe himself mistaken; and thus he often produced extraordinary scenes, and placed persons in very awkward situations by attempting the denouement of an attachment which had existed only in his own imagination. On these occasions the poor Admiral was a complete marplot, and the moment he took it into his head that any one in whom he was interested had taken a "cargo of love aboard," he watched both parties with a jealousy equal to that of the lovers themselves; interfered at every stage of the business; took upon himself to do quite as much as though he were the father or guardian of one or both of them; and above all, never permitted what he called "false colors" to be hung out, by either one or the other, without doing his utmost to expose their hypocrisy.

It may easily be supposed that this was rather an awkward character to be placed in the midst of such a manœuvring family as that of the Orvilles; and, more particularly, from the Hartley family, as well as the father of Forrester, having been old and valued friends of the Admiral, he thought himself authorized to interfere in all their plans.

He had heard of Forrester's attachment, and had been led to understand that it was returned by Emily: thus Lady Orville had the greatest difficulty in preventing his promoting their union so contrary to her wishes and projects. At the same time she sought to take advantage of this disposition, by attempting to persuade him that Emily was attached to her son; being fully aware that, if he once imbibed this idea, he would do every thing to bring about the match, and perhaps influence Orville to determine on the marriage by some decisive promise with regard to the disposition of his own property; for she saw that his attachment to the Hartleys was such, that they would certainly share his fortune with her own children, should the Admiral die without discovering his niece. Thus the double marriage of the children became doubly desirable.

Here was a web which it took all Lady Orville's abilities to weave successfully; and a series of plans, which were every moment in danger of derangement by the open-honesty of the straightforward Admiral. He, however, seeing various couples proceeding in the path to matrimony, was delighted at promoting what he conceived to be the wishes of all parties, and soon became as busy

as Lady Orville herself in the politics of the various marriages which he imagined to be on the tapis.

CHAPTER XV.

DREAMS AND REALITIES.

Much time was spent by Langley in unprofitable scheming, which ought to have been devoted to active exertion. Petitions and solicitations were dreamed of, and their success anticipated, but never acted upon. No project was planned, either by himself or his wife, that Langley did not resolve to adopt; but these resolutions were never put into effect. From the moment any project was conceived, his active and sanguine mind began to imagine the result; and he would walk for hours ruminating upon the events that might accrue, imagining the whole history of his future life to which the pursuit of this plan was to give a new coloring; and would return home without having taken one step towards the accomplishment. His wife saw this failing with regret; lamented it with bitterness, and became almost hopeless of any change in a disposition which, from habit, was become almost a disease.

As poverty, however, pressed more closely; as the bitterness of his fate daily increased; as every hope which, almost unacknowledged by himself, he had cherished, that the justice of the heir at law would at last make some provision, out of the immense wealth which he had derived so unexpectedly, for one whom his prosperity had rendered pennyless, faded away, he at length became roused by the necessity of effecting something.

Lord Orville had been profuse in his promises; Langley felt himself to be well received by the family; he was always a welcome guest at the table; was never "de trop" in Lady Orville's carriage or Opera box; and was frequently the young Peer's companion in his St. James's morning stroll, or in his cabriolet promenade in the Park. These noble people likewise frequently condescended to make use of him in various ways. His talents were such as rendered him an agreeable companion; there was no way in which his presence could cross any of their various schemes; and Langley was pronounced by all to be a particular favorite at Orville House.

All these circumstances had been revolved in his own mind, and elaborately detailed to his wife by Langley, when he determined on making the application alluded to in a foregoing chapter: and the knowledge of the actual power which the Orvilles possessed by their influence in various quarters, really afforded them very rational grounds for his hope of success.

Still, however, day after day passed without the experiment having been made. Langley would remain for hours picturing to himself the reception which would be given to this petition, and imagining a long train of results which promoted him from the humble secretaryship, he hoped at first to attain, to some prominent and important appointment. Yet this, alas, was only in his imagination; and he returned home daily to his wife in the same state of poverty, without having advanced one step, or made one exertion.

At length, on the morning after the last party described at Orville House, Langley really determined to make his long-projected application to Lord Orville, who had during the dinner of the preceding day, been more than usually kind and familiar, and more than commonly profuse in his offers of service.

On all other occasions, Langley had approached Orville House, if not with a light heart, with a confident step. Certain of his welcome, with no other motive than that of adding to the circle within, and suiting his morning arrangements with theirs, the knocker was applied with as much ease by Langley, as by the most independent of the frequenters of the gay mansion. This morning however, he approached with a slow and hesitating step, which became slower as he approached the house; twice he entered the portico, and twice retreated without knocking at the door. At length, taking a turn round the square (there is nothing like action to restring the relaxed nerves,) he summoned courage, and gave his usual rap, which was alertly attended to by the fat porter, who appeared an enviable being at this moment to Langley, since he had his place, and had no favors to ask.

Lord Orville was with Forrester, who, having called to pay his respects to Miss Hartley, had been purposely shown into the library, where Orville had detained him until he heard the carriage roll away that was to carry his mother and Emily upon a long round of morning visits, and upon a pilgrimage to all the lace venders in St. James's.

Emily had naturally expected such a visit, yet had internally felt it a relief that it had not been paid; though she agreed with Lady Orville in an observation, that it was certainly very remiss in Mr. Forrester to pass the first morning of his arrival in London without paying his respects, and bringing news of her dear Lady Emily.

Forrester, during his detention by Lord Orville, was upon thorns; for he felt that the result of his morning's interview with Emily might either confirm his fears, or remove his doubts for ever: yet Lord Orville was so diffuse in his conversation; entered upon such various subjets; and discussed so many matters, with such an appearance of interest to himself, that poor Forrester found it impossible to escape.

At length being aware that the carriage was gone, Orville suddenly finished a sentence with, "But I beg your pardon; I am detaining you from Miss Hartley, who is doubtless anxious to see you, and to hear news from the Grove." He rang the bell, and desired the servant to show Mr. Forrester up to Miss Hartley.

"Miss Hartley has been gone out with my Lady some time, my Lord," said the servant; to the evident mortification of Forrester, and to the apparent surprise of Lord Orville.

To Forrester, suspense was worse than certainty; and it was thus continued for an indefinite period, at a time when every moment appeared an age.

At this instant Monsieur Fripon announced

Langley, as desiring to speak with Lord Orville alone.

Forrester, whose heart was ever alive to the distress of his fellow-creatures in a moment banished the effects of his own disappointment, to inquire of Orville if he knew any thing of Langley's affairs; and if he had yet succeeded in doing any thing to redeem his fortunes.

"Faith, no!" replied Lord Orville, coldly—"He is a very clever fellow—a genius—quite the fashion with a certain set—entertaining beyond any thing; like Yorick, 'a fellow of infinite jest.' He is good enough to amuse my friends; it was all I wanted; I inquired no farther—Ah! my dear Langley, how do you do? I am delighted to see you;" greeting the entrance of Langley with a hearty shake of the hand.

"Quite well, I thank your lordship;" answered Langley, with an embarrassed air; for Langley was not the man to prefer a petition either with grace or confidence.

"Langley," said Forrester, also shaking him heartily by the hand, "I am glad to renew my acquaintance with you; and whenever you can quit the gay metropolis for a few weeks, remember Forrester Lodge will be open to receive you, and you will delight me by becoming my guest.—Lord Orville, I leave you to your business with Langley, and must charge you with my respects, and the expression of my disappointment to Miss Hartley;" and so saying he quitted the room.

Langley now felt his embarrassment redouble: instead of his usual ease of manner, he could neither sit nor stand still. He felt a blush stealing over his face, and his confusion of mind increased, until he was in some measure relieved by Lord Orville saying—

"Why, my dear Langley, what made you leave us so early last night? we had never found you more entertaining—but, I suppose, some amour; some love in the case. You poets are devils among the women."

"Oh no, my Lord; no amour," replied Langley; "no love in the case;" and his mind reverted to his wife and the second floor. "I retired gratified beyond measure at having had the honor to contribute to the pleasure of your Lordship's party."

"Oh, I never saw you in finer feather; you were the zest of the evening. I don't know what we should have done without you."

"Oh!" thought Langley, "'tis done; I am a made man, I am a fool not to strike while the iron is hot."

"But you requested to see me alone?" continued Orville.

"True, my Lord, I did take that liberty," replied Langley, hesitating—

"Liberty! Langley. Nay, among friends, these things are no liberties." All this encouraged Langley to throw off some portion of his diffidence, and urged by his necessities, and encouraged by Orville's kindness, he proceeded—

"The fact is—I mean—Sir—that is—I have presumed that our acquaintance has not endured so long without my pretending to some portion of your Lordship's confidence and friendship——" Here he came to a full stop; but was again encouraged by Lord Orville's replying:

"Certainly. I know none of my acquaintance I esteem so much; none so well entitled to my esteem."

"My Lord, you do me honor. It is therefore that I presume to remind your Lordship—of the kind offers of service you have made me at various periods—and of a promise—"

"A promise!" exclaimed Lord Orville.

"Yes; one day, after dinner, your Lordship did me the honor to promise to use your influence with his grace of ——; and I now presume to remind you of my necessities, and to request its performance." The petition was now fairly out; and Langley, with downcast eye, awaited the result; but was immediately relieved by the kindness of Lord Orville's reply.

"My dear Langley," said he, "this frankness delights me. Believe me, nothing will give me greater pleasure than to be of service to one I esteem so much,"

"Oh, my Lord, I knew it; I knew I was not wrong in calculating on your Lordship's kindness," said Langley.

"Indeed you were not, Langley," said Lord Orville, in a tone of sympathy, calculated to remove Langley's embarrassment. "Depend upon it, I will take the first opportunity of seeing my noble friend. I will lay your whole case before him, and, backed by my recommendation, have very little doubt of success."

"My Lord, you overpower me with gratitude. I cannot express the fulness of those thanks with which my heart is overflowing;" exclaimed Langley, nearly overpowered by his feelings.

"Never mention it, my dear fellow," replied Orville. "The only use of power is to serve our friends; and you will never want one while I am here; and though at present I must wish you a good morning, command me on all occasions, I beseech you."

Langley, in this dismissal, saw only the delicacy which would not prolong the embarrassment of his situation, or put him to the trouble of returning his thanks; and saying, "My Lord, you confound me by your goodness," pressed Lord Orville's offered hand. "I take my leave with a deep sense of the gratitude I owe your Lordship."

"Depend upon my exertions. I trust soon to give you a good account of my mission: and to congratulate you on its success. Adieu, mon ami. Au revoir."

Langley could scarce refrain from tears of joy and gratitude. His eyes were suffused and his utterance choked with the fullness of his heart, as he hastily quitted the room, internally blessing his patron for his kindness; and all anxiety to impart to his wife the good tidings of his success. Lord Orville rang the bell, which was immediately answered by his valet; and coolly taking a pinch of snuff, he deliberately said:

"Fripon, tell the porter to say 'Not at home' to Mr. Langley for the future."

CHAPTER XVI.

A MEETING.

On the same morning mentioned in the last chapter, Lady Orville, not being at all inclined for visits, proposed a shopping morning's lounge, and took Emily with her.

The moment that Orville had got rid of Forrester and dismissed Langley, he mounted his horse; and, calling for Hartley away they galloped, and catching sight of the carriage as it dashed down Regent street (for at that moment there was situated the grand emporium of female finery,) they joined it in time to hand Lady Orville and Emily into the shop; or, as it is now more politely called, a "depot." There were displayed the productions of France and India, to tempt the English guineas from English pockets Lady Orville was too well known not to meet with immediate attention; and lounging through the rooms with Emily on her arm, they were obsequiously followed by the stiff-cravatted shopman, who beladyshipped them both to a great extent; and calling for one tempting article after another, displayed all the new importations which had been the result of Mr. H's. last visit to Paris: while Lord Orville poured his insidious compliments into Emily's ear, and Hartley rattled away with the Countess.

To enumerate the variety of merchandise which here met the apethetic glances of Lady Orville, whose senses were far too *usés* to be gratified or surprised by any thing of the kind, and the astonished gaze of the less experienced Emily, would require volumes. Cashmeres were unfolded, jewel cases opened, porcelain vases, and bronzes, and marbles displayed to the admiring eyes of the beholders, and a variety of things were ordered. At length Lady Orville said, "By-the-by, my dear Emily, we shall want some costume for the Marchioness of Tourville's fancy ball;" and immediately led the way to the dressing-room, telling the attendant that the gentlemen must be admitted. Lady Orville's wishes were paramount with the civil shopkeepers.

Doors, which had hitherto been concealed by the shelves which contained a variety of articles in front of them, were immediately thrown open, and the party entered a long room, in which were several groups of women at work under various superintendents.

Almost the whole of these little sempstresses were young women, and some of them exceedingly pretty. The entrance of two such fashionable men as Lord Orville and Frank Hartley was the signal for a number of little espiegleries, and a hundred significant glances exchanged between each other, "*a' l'insu*," as the French say, of their task-mistresses.

That some of these glances were directed towards the gentlemen themselves we do not deny; nor did the presence of Lady Orville and Emily prevent their being returned in kind; or impede a few whispered compliments, as they took up and admired the various articles which were displayed. These little whispers were received with affected blushes, and a giggle of delight, which was communicated to their companions, by one of the aforesaid significant glances from the distinguished fair one.

While Emily was trying on a turban, Lord Orville discerned, for the first time, a young female, at some distance from her companions, anxiously and industriously engaged upon some tambour work. This young person unlike the rest, had continued to ply her needle without taking any apparent notice of the party. She was dressed in deep though humble mourning; and contrived so to conceal her face by the attitude in which she worked, and by a profusion of fine black hair, that Orville could not, with all his manœuvring, discover whether she was handsome or ugly.

Withdrawing Hartley from a flirtation with two or three young women, who seemed but too ready to give both him and his friend encouragement, by the forwardness of their manners, he directed his attention to this newly discovered beauty, by saying, "Egad, Hartley, we have missed the finest woman in the room, after all, if we may judge by her figure."

Hartley turned his eyes in the direction pointed out by Orville, and saw a person, rather above the middle height, bending over a tambour frame. She still continued in that position, in which it was impossible to see her face, but her figure seemed to be of exquisite proportions. Her head nearly rested on the frame, so that her work was nearly covered with a profusion of large glossy ringlets. Two delicate hands were also perceptible, plying the tambour needle with apparently unwearied industry; while a foot, corresponding in proportion and beauty with the hands, peeped from beneath the black crape dress in which she was so completely enveloped, that nothing but the white throat was vissible above it.

"What an attitude and figure for a picture of Penelope," exclaimed Orville, in an under-tone to Hartley; "we must see her nearer."

With this intention, and apparently with the view of inspecting her work, they sauntered towards the embroideress, who sat at some distance from her fellow-workwomen, as though she disliked a nearer neighborhood. Startled by their approach; which was not unobserved by the object of their attention; the only notice she seemed to take of it, was by bending her head closer over her frame, and striving still more to screen her countenance from observation. As they approached, this determination at concealment became so evident as to rouse their curiosity, but although they had now come quite close to her, she did not raise her head.

They perceived that her hands trembled, and that she hardly knew where she placed the needle; and as Hartley, at length, leaned quite over her work, he heard her breathe so hard and audibly, that every respiration seemed almost a sob. At this instant, unable any longer to conceal her countenance or restrain her agitation, the needle dropped from her trembling hand, she sunk back in her chair, her black hair fell from her face, and discovered the pale but still beautiful features of Caroline Dormer.

The effect of this apparition upon Hartley was instantaneous. The blood rushed into his face, then receded to his heart, leaving him almost as pale as Caroline. His cruel neglect flashed at once upon his memory; and it was only owing to Orville's

presence of mind, who had perceived the recognition, that he did not betray his agitation, and exhibit a scene which might have involved himself in ridicule, and excited unworthy suspicions of Caroline.

As it was, the slight commotion attracted the attention of one of the task-mistresses; to whom Orville said, that their sudden approach had alarmed the young lady; and, apologising for the circumstance, requested a glass of water, to recover her. The water was soon brought, accompanied by a smart reprimand from the termagant; and Orville led Hartley away, while the young ladies laughed at the affected squeamishness of Miss Dormer. Lady Orville and Emily were, fortunately, still intent on the important circumstance of choosing their dresses for the fancy ball.

"I see," said Orville, "that she is an old acquaintance. She is a beautiful girl, and you seem to be a happy man, Hartley."

"I would give worlds to speak to her," replied Hartley.

"Worlds, nonsense. Worlds, to speak to a milliner! If it be really as you say, that you do not know how to obtain an interview, and wish it, why not go up and admire her work, and during the conversation, name some time and place? rely upon it, it will be attended to."

"Orville, you don't know her. How she came to be in such a situation as this, I am at a loss to conceive."

"Nay, your curiosity need not long remain ungratified. I see I must still be your tutor, though I was in hopes by this time you might go alone." Then, raising his voice, "by-the-by," said he, "Hartley, I have not given you that address I promised you. I will give it now," and tearing a leaf from his pocket-book, he apparently wrote an address. Then, showing the paper, instead of an address, Hartley read the words, "I must see you; meet me this evening at —— at eight; pray do not fail." "Is that right?" and he folded it up in as small a compass as possible, and gave it to Hartley. Then, walking up again in the direction of Caroline's place, he engaged the women who were nearest to her in conversation. During this period Hartley approached Caroline, as though with the intention of merely asking if she had recovered from her fright, and dropped the paper upon the work before her. A blush overspread her features, a slight sensation of repugnance appeared to agitate her frame; then, seizing the paper, and hastily hiding it in her bosom, that universal pocket of a woman, she cast one glance of mingled tenderness and reproach at Hartley, and resumed her work; though with such trembling hands, that there is little doubt but every stitch was obliged to be unpicked, and that the day in question proved a "*dies non*," as far as it regarded Caroline's labor in the service of the Regent-street emporium.

By this time Lady Orville had expended her whole stock of curiosity, and became herself tired of tiring the patience of her shopkeeping attendants; this was the only circumstance that ever induced her to relieve them from the trouble she gave them. In her eyes, such people were made for no other purposes than to wait upon the pleasures, and to serve the caprices of the great; and the most elaborate trouble she could possibly occasion them was, in her mind, more than repaid, by a condescending nod of "good morning," as she resumed her vis-a-vis, and drove away to the park.

As for Hartley, he had been startled into himself again by the unexpected sight of Caroline. A few months of London dissipation, under the auspices of such a man as Orville, had not deadened, though it might have repressed, those generous feelings of youth, which were the principal characteristics of his heart, when we first saw him stealing from his noisy companions to the garden of the poor curate at Oxford.

For the first few weeks thoughts of Caroline were perpetually in his mind, and he wrote two or three letters, filled with protestations of the same warmth of affection as that which had characterized his conversation at their parting interview. During this short period the post time that had brought him a letter from her was anxiously looked for, and considered the brightest hour of the day. A series, however, of dissipated pleasures; a constant succession of female society; two or three liaisons, partly platonic and partly of a different character; soon relaxed the nerves of his attachment (if we may use the expression) to Caroline, as well as the purity of his mind; and his own neglect of their correspondence soon made the appearance of her letters a reproach, rather than a pleasure, to him. He suffered them to remain unopened for a day on his dressing-table; and we are ashamed to say, that they at length remained unanswered, if not unperused. There is nothing so subversive of that generous and virtuous attachment which the youthful heart feels towards a woman as the kind of life into which Lord Orville introduced Hartley. It was not, like that of Lascelles, sufficiently *broad* to make his heart turn with disgust from the vice, or laxity of morals which it exhibited; but was so disguised with the affectation of delicacy, or rather with that substitution of elegance which so often passes for delicacy, that there was everything to allure, and nothing to disgust. There was sufficient refinement to banish all idea of that *grossiereté* which would have driven Hartley at once from the pursuit of pleasure that partook of this character; and so much excitement of the passions, kept up by the aid of music and conversation, that half the minds in the world would have denominated these pursuits merely elegant enjoyments, which were in fact the mere sensual indulgence of vicious propensities.

In the midst of such a career as this, no wonder that Caroline was forgotten; or, if some recollections of her intruded at dressing time or in the first waking moments of the morning, no wonder that they were soon banished by those thickening engagements which now filled the visiting book of Hartley.

Although, however, his heart might not be influenced by the mere remembrance of all that had passed between them, it could not withstand her personal appearance. The unexpected apparition in the work-room had recalled him to all that he had so long forgotten; the study of the old curate—the little garden behind the parsonage—the arbor in the green walk—all rushed at once into his memory, and called up the long buried, though not

yet dead, affections of his heart, "like spirits from the vasty deep;" and they were accompanied with many a bitter pang for the undeserved neglect with which he had treated Caroline. Her pale face, too, and her dim eye, so unlike the buoyant health in which he had left her, did not fail to add to the impression he had received.

As they rode to the park, Hartley was two or three times on the point of making Lord Orville the confidant of his early affection; but, Orville, who ridiculed the idea of a serious attachment for a milliner, rallied him so unmercifully on his wan countenance, and on the evident effect which the unexpected meeting had produced, that Hartley shrunk instinctively from making the communication; while his heart turned sick at the libertine allusions, and the laughing congratulations, with which Orville spoke of the "sentimental sempstress," and anticipated the result of Hartley's expected interview.

In agreeing to the solicitation for a meeting, Hartley, in spite of his new mode of life, had not harbored a thought derogatory to the honor of Caroline. The revival of all his old feelings of affection, mingled with a strong curiosity to know how she could come into such a situation, were the principal incentives to the wish; no evil intention, no insidious motive, as yet mingled with his intentions or his ideas; nor could the raillery of Orville induce him to think more lightly of her, because he found her in such a situation as that in which he had discovered her.

As for Caroline, she could not recover from the effects of this first meeting with Hartley. Although it was natural that she should expect to meet him in London; and thought that her heart was prepared to encounter him with the indifference which his neglect of her had deserved; yet she had calculated wrongly on her strength; and under such circumstances, what woman could calculate rightly? There was no occasion for a sight of Hartley to recall all the scenes of their former intimacy to *her* recollection; the study, the garden, the arbor, were all too strongly impressed upon *her* memory to require any adventitious aid to recall them. A woman's heart does not so easily forget these things as that of a man. Such feelings are all in all to a woman: while to a man they are in general the mere episodes to a greater, though not sweeter, excitement. To a man, they are reliefs from the severe labors, the more important duties, or rather pursuits of life; to a woman, they are life itself. Caroline could scarcely breathe from agitation when she placed Hartley's note in her bosom; yet, though her heart beat against it most tumultuously, she could not but acknowledge that it beat less unhappily. She hurried away, the first opportunity that her task allowed her; and luckily the pencil, and the hurried manner with which it had been written, did not permit her to discover that it was not Hartley's own hand-writing.

At first, the idea of again seeing him to whom she had devoted her earliest and warmest affection, in mutual confidence; and the hope that the interview might produce some explanation of Hartley's neglect that would prove it not to have been culpable, gave to Caroline the only feeling of pleasure her poor heart had experienced for months. But these hopes, faint as they were, were soon blighted at the recollection that, since their parting, circumstances had rendered the distance that existed between their situation still greater than it was before. She was then, as now, the daughter of a gentleman, though a poor one; but she was then living under his roof, respectably if not splendidly; and mixing in the society of that caste in which she had been born: now, she was, in her own eyes, deemed a menial; earning her daily bread, the companion of beings of an inferior order, whose vulgarity and difference of manners forced themselves unpleasantly, even on the patient and forbearing mind of Caroline.

If Hartley's family would have shrunk from the thoughts of uniting their son with the daughter of a poor clergyman; with how much more indignation would they discard the idea of receiving a hired sempstress as his wife—one who labored for a weekly pittance on that finery which they were born to wear.

Poor Caroline felt all this, and her heart swelled with grief almost to bursting. Though reason told her there could be no hope; and that it was better she should continue to think Hartley cruel and neglectful, than have her tender feelings again roused by being undeceived in a supposition which at least called her pride in to her support, if it did not conquer her feelings of affection: yet she still clung to the idea of proving him not to be unworthy of the love with which he had inspired her; and with this hope she at length determined upon granting the solicited interview—and, when has woman determined otherwise, than to act upon the strong impulses of the heart, rather than upon the less vivid arguments of reason.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE INTERVIEW.

Caroline Dormer was far superior to the situation in which we last saw her; her education had fitted her for other and better things, and her mind had not been reduced with her circumstances. She had loved Hartley with all the energy and devotedness of which her young heart was capable. She had wept with agony over his undeserved neglect; but she had suffered in silence. She had passively permitted the march of circumstances, which had reduced her to her present situation, without a struggle to avoid it. Hopeless of him she had become hopeless of every thing else; life had become distasteful, and her heart sickened under the burthen of her disappointment. Pleasure, pain, labor, and ease, were alike indifferent; or rather, every other feeling and idea was absorbed in that one great sensation which occupied every thought and feeling of her soul.—Whatever might be her occupation, Hartley, his attachment, and his neglect were the subjects of her meditation and regret. His figure haunted her in her sleep; and her waking dreams always pictured him to her imagination, and recalled his broken vows and violated promises to her recollection.

Her mind thus occupied with his image, no wonder at the agitation she experienced at the sight of him, nor of that which his brief note produced. At first, she determined to avoid him: she had, during her short residence in London, learned enough to know the light in which some one or two of her companions were looked upon by men their superiors in rank; and though she did not place herself upon a level with these light-minded and vain creatures, yet she dreaded Hartley's partaking of the same sentiments as the men with whom he associated. She saw how different the world was in reality to that which they had both pictured it in their earliest days; yet was there still that tinge of romance in her disposition, which, almost unknown to herself, whispered a hope that the difference of their rank might not prove an insuperable barrier to their union. She felt her superiority to her companions, and therefore never sunk herself to a level with them in her own opinion, and she trusted this superiority would be acknowledged by others as well as by herself; by her companions themselves it was felt, but only to generate their envy, and to tempt their vulgar ridicule.

Caroline had imagined that she had resigned herself entirely to her fate, and that she had made up her mind to the complete loss of Hartley: his appearance, however, soon convinced her to the contrary; and that tinge of the romantic in her disposition, in spite of her better reason, soon induced her to determine upon granting the desired interview. This determination, however, was not adopted without a great deal of hesitation: though her heart throbbed with affection for Hartley, it was not free from indignation at his neglect; and though her feelings in his favor hurried her into hopes that this might be satisfactorily explained, yet her better judgment whispered that she had better remain in her present misery, than run the risk of having it removed by temporary happiness, and renewed by future disappointments. It is scarcely necessary to say, that womanhood got the better of reason; for, where there is real affection in the case, when was it ever otherwise? As the hour approached, her agitation increased; and at the last moment she was on the point of relinquishing her determination, when all their former meetings rushing at once upon her memory, she threw on her shawl, and hurried to the place of appointment.

Hartley was already there; so that she had neither the bitterness of that moment of anxious suspense, which a want of implicit punctuality in such appointments occasions; nor the opportunity which such a moment might have afforded for reflection, and for a change in her resolution. Her agitation prevented her meeting the animated greeting of Hartley with any thing but a faint smile. He drew her arm silently within his, and, avoiding the crowd that was passing through that part of the park where they had met; they sauntered into the more solitary walks, to impart to each other all that had passed since they had met in the garden of the good curate at Oxford.

Caroline's simple story was soon told; she had no succession of passions to tinge the intervening months with variety; her whole soul had been occupied by her love for Hartley, and her grief at his desertion, and for the death of her father.

The poor curate had been snatched suddenly from the world while in the performance of his clerical duties; and Caroline found herself left alone, utterly unprovided for, with all the ideas and feelings of a gentlewoman, without the slightest means for her support. Her father's successor desired possession of the house as soon as decency permitted him to turn its mourning occupant out; for church preferment is as eagerly and rapaciously grasped by the teachers of meekness and christianity, as that of a less sacred nature by less sacred characters; and Caroline found herself obliged to seek an asylum in the house of a humble and poor relative in London.

Too proud, as well as too just, to owe her maintenance to those who could ill afford to support the expense, the moment of her arrival, she urged her relative to look out in every direction for some means by which she might prevent her being a burthen to any one. Caroline was well educated, and accomplished beyond what might have been expected from the limited income of her father. Her accomplishments had been derived from her mother, who had been a very superior woman; and who had imparted all to her daughter that she had derived from a very excellent education. It was her wish, therefore, to turn these talents to account, and to engage herself as governess in some seminary, or family. Unhappily, however the little interest her relative possessed, did not lie in the direction by which this desirable end could be accomplished; and for the want of some high recommendation, rendered her application after advertised situations abortive.

Tired of maintaining her, this person, having at length heard of a vacancy in the establishment in Regent street, and knowing Caroline's ingenuity and taste in embroidery, she urged her acceptance of it with so much pertinacity, that, repugnant as it was to her pride, Caroline became an inmate and a sempstress in that emporium of female finery.

These artless annals of her life were soon recapitulated by Caroline to her lover, with a truth and ingenuousness which Hartley dared not imitate in his recital to her. How different, indeed, had been his life! what a detail of infidelities to his vows! what an exhibition of heartless inconstancy; how many scenes bordering upon libertinism must he not have represented, had he given any true narrative of the life he had led since their last meeting, when he had declared that he loved her, and only her; and that he should love her, and only her, for ever.

The sight of Caroline; the renewal of their intercourse; the artless recital of her melancholy adventures; recalled, however, all his former love; while the sufferings she had undergone; the patient resignation with which his neglect of her had been borne; gave an additional tenderness to all his feelings, that rendered the renewal of this intimacy delightful. Hours flew on, while they were thus indulging in recollections of their life in Oxford; and it was not till the chimes sounded the three-quarters past ten, that Caroline recalled to mind the regulation which compelled her to return to Regent street by eleven. With this thought, too

came that of the imprudence of remaining so late, and alone, with Hartley; and what he himself might think of such an imprudence, formed not the least part of her distress.

As she detailed this to him, Hartley silently cursed Regent street, the tambour frame, and the Horse-guards, that so impertinently put them in mind of the hour. He had not tasted any pleasure during his career of dissipation that equalled his conversation, and the renewal of his intercourse with Caroline. There was a freshness about his feelings; a renovation of youth in their enjoyment; a *nature* about the delight he had experienced, so different from the "*fade*" pleasures, derived from the artificial women with whom he had lately associated, that, in spite of her humble situation, forced a comparison on his mind not at all unfavorable to Caroline. During their short and hurried return to Regent street, she had promised to meet him again; though she now persisted in her determination to bring a companion in whom she could confide; nor could all Hartley's entreaties to the contrary, make her change this resolution. The moment, therefore, that Caroline should have determined on this companion, she was to inform Hartley by letter, when he was to make his own appointment for another interview.

With this agreement they parted: Caroline to return to her solitary bed, with the recollections of the evening for her only companions; and to think on all that her lover had said in extenuation of his late conduct, and all the promises, which his manner, rather than his words, had given her for the future:—Hartley, to hurry through a late dinner in his dressing-room, and to pursue his nightly career of splendid parties, which left little room for recollections of Caroline, till his carriage set him down in the Albany, where he had now taken up his residence, exhausted by excitement and fatigue.

Here, however, the question of his intentions with regard to Caroline forced itself upon his mind; but he fell asleep before he could contrive to answer it satisfactorily.

CHAPTER XVIII.

RENCOUNTERS.

On quitting Lord Orville, Langley flew home to delight his wife with the news of his successful application; for successful in the fullest meaning of the word did his sanguine mind consider it. To his surprise, however, he learned that Mrs. Langley was not within; a circumstance which the more surprised him, since, as the concealment of their marriage did not permit him to accompany her, she very seldom left their humble domicile, excepting in the evening with her child. Burthened with his good news, Langley was half angry that his wife was not at home to share it with him; but giving way to his natural inclination for day dreams, he sauntered towards the Park, to enjoy, in imagination, all the anticipated results of the kind promises of Lord Orville; promises which we have seen were very likely to be forgotten, and certain to be broken by that honorable peer.

In the mean time, his wife, who had very litile dependance upon the performance of her husband's promise of an application, and almost as little upon the result of it, even were it made, had quitted home, with the determination of seeking out the maternal uncle before alluded to. A morning paper had announced his arrival in town, and his domicile at the house of a titled relation; and it was towards this mansion that Mrs. Langley directed her steps.

Certain that this attempt would never receive the sanction of her husband, who, from her uncle's conduct to her mother at her marriage, had set him down as an unfeeling tyrant; she had taken advantage of his absence, which generally lasted the whole morning, to make this attempt without his knowledge.

During her walk, she summoned all the recollections of her mother's description of the early affection of her brother, to give her courage to persevere in the attempt; and arranged, as well as she could, her short story in her mind so as to produce the best effect. Her heart beat quickly as she approached the door, but sunk, almost to sickening, as she lifted the knocker. The recollection, however of the duty she had to perform, the hope of the benefit which might result to her husband and child, and the knowledge that it was her nearest relation that she was seeking, gave her courage, and the ponderous knocker dropped from her hand in one of those equivocal raps, which may be interpreted either double or single, according to circumstances. The door flew open in a second in the hands of the fat porter, while three or four lacquies were on the alert to escort any "admitted" visiter to the morning saloon. On the appearance, however, of one, not on the list, they lounged back to their newspapers, or their fireside gossip, which the knock at the door for a moment had interrupted. The porter's jolly countenance at once lost its good-natured expression on the sight of a pelisse and bonnet rather faded, and a lady who knocked at the door for herself. To her faultering question, which she could scarcely breathe audibly from her lips, if the object of her visit was within, was returned a monotonous "not at home," pronounced in a tone which made it appear as though the porter uttered it mechanically.

To those who have made a great exertion to bring their mind to solicit an interview of importance, and who have looked forward to the result of it as forming an epoch in their lives; who have accomplished the courage necessary for the operation, through many hours of pain and indecision; the mortification arising from this hackneyed refusal to be seen, will be easily felt; rendered more keen too by the notion that one has, of its not being true. Mrs. Langley looked wistfully in the face of the porter, as she faintly requested to know "if he was sure he was right!"

"Not at home," again reiterated the porter. Mrs. Langley tottered down the steps, and the door closed with a sound that seemed to shut out from her heart all future hope; such an effect has even trifling circumstances, when the heart has been wrought up to a certain pitch of misery and excite-

ment. She felt that the difficulty which this "Not at home" barrier placed in the way of gaining an interview with her uncle, was really as formidable as though he had been shut up in some impracticable fortress; and she dreaded that a letter could never produce the desired effect.

Determined, however, to persevere, and to leave nothing neglected on her part to redeem the fortunes of her husband; she set this down merely as a single disappointment, and her spirits were reviving, when she perceived herself the object of attention to a gentleman in a very elegant cabriolet, which was proceeding at a pace a very little quicker than her own, close to the pavement.

Blushing at the observation she had attracted, she drew her veil close over her face, and turned down another street; in the hope of avoiding a gaze which, even in the short moment that she had seen it, she could not but perceive was intenly fixed upon herself.

It was in vain, however, that she turned down street after street, the eternal cabriolet seemed to be everywhere, and to cross her at every moment; nor could she fail, now and then, to meet the glance of the driver, who distressed her by the freedom of his evident admiration. Perceiving that he was determined to follow her, and dreading lest he might discover her residence, in attempting to mislead him she bewildered herself, and, becoming confused, she found herself unexpectedly at the entrance to the Park, when she imagined herself far distant from it. The Park, however, presented a refuge from what she now began to deem actual persecution, and she entered it at Harrington gate. To her surprise, however, the carriage also passed into the Park, thus designating the elevated rank of the driver.

As she crossed the avenues, he jumped out of his cabriolet and followed her on foot. Twice he attempted to address her, and twice was he repressed, with a dignity which awed even his assurance into respect. A nearer view of the face which had attracted him at a distance, and the novelty of the intrinsic modesty with which she repelled his attempt to address her, seemed only to add strength to his determination to discover who she was; but, fearing her resolution never to take the direction of her own residence while he continued his pursuit, he became angry with himself that he had not relinquished the task of the discovery to his servant whom he had left in charge of his cabriolet; and, fearing to lose all chance of knowing where his incognito lived, he was looking anxiously out for some acquaintance, to whom he might depute this honorable office. In the meantime, however, he did not relax in his endeavors to change her determination; till, roused at last into an exhibition of indignation, she exclaimed—"Sir, your perseverance becomes insulting."

"Let that perseverance plead for me," retorted her indefatigable persecutor.

Finding all attempts to get rid of his intrusion vain, she suddenly stopped, and assuming as much dignity as her agitation would permit, she said calmly—"tell me, sir, is there anything in my appearance; was there anything in my manners to authorize this intrusion? or to induce you thus to follow me, when you perceive your attentions to be offensive?"

"So far from it," replied the unabashed intruder, "it was the perfect modesty of your demeanor, added to an appearance of grief, which I thought perhaps I might alleviate, that attracted my notice."

"You appear sir," said Mrs. Langley still retaining her composure, "to be a gentleman; and yet own, that the very circumstances, which ought to have protected me from your addresses, are the very reasons you allege for insulting me. Let that modesty you pretend to admire, sir, be the best assurance of the uselessness of solicitation; and let me pass on. I entreat—nay, sir, I insist on the free liberty of passing unfollowed and without molestation;" and, seeing him still determined to preserve, she added, "otherwise you will compel me to appeal to the first stranger I meet, for protection against your insults."

Mrs. Langley's agitation had increased during this appeal; and the last words were uttered in so loud a tone of voice, that the words "insults," and "protection," awoke Langley from the day-dream which he was indulging on one of the benches near the spot on which this conversation had taken place.

Too short-sighted to distinguish the parties by whom his attention had been attracted, he turned towards the spot, exclaiming, "Eh, who calls for protection?"

Langley was recognized in a moment by both parties: and Mrs. Langley dreading a thousand disagreeable circumstances in the event of the recognition being mutual, turned short round, and walked swiftly away in an opposite direction.

"Protection! Nonsense! Langley," exclaimed Orville; he it was who had thus persecuted Mrs. Langley. "You have spoiled the prettiest tete-a-tete in the world, and have actually frightened away the prettiest woman I have seen these six months.

"I spoil a tete-a-tete," stammered Langley, who saw his hopes fading in the idea of offending Lord Orville.

"Yes and the only reparation you can make me, is to undo the mischief you have occasioned, by following that little woman in the blue pelisse and cottage-bonnet, and discovering her residence."

"I—my—Lord; I am so short-sighted."

"Not a word, or you will miss her—and I would not lose her for a thousand. Nay, fly, my dear Langley, and when you bring me the intelligence of her residence I shall have news for you from his Grace of——." And so saying, without waiting for a reply, Lord Orville jumped into his cabriolet, while Langley, confused, and scarely knowing what he was doing, mechanically walked on in the direction pointed out by Orville.

"What can he take me for," thought Langley, almost aloud, as an indignant feeling at the unworthiness of his employment arose in his mind. "I follow a woman for him! A good appointment may be a very good thing, but I should not enjoy the best place in the world if I had to reflect on having to perform one dirty action to procure it." Such were the reflections which arose in his mind; yet still he walked on, in the direction which Mrs. Langley had taken, though his infirmity did not permit him to distinguish the object of his pursuit. He saw he might offend Lord Orville, and crush

the hopes upon which he had been building. He did not like thus to kick his basket of eggs into the street at once, and mar the fortune he had been enjoying in anticipation; neither did he like the positive manner, in which he had been despatched on his unworthy errand by Lord Orville, who seemed to expect that his patronage was to be purchased by any services which he might require, from those who enjoyed it.—Yet how to extricate himself from this dilemma? At this moment he was joined by Mr. Versatile Tadpole.

Tadpole was a young man of obscure birth, with means sufficient to enable him to live without the drudgery of office or business. His sole ambition in life was to be thought intimate with persons of fashion. He was the veriest lord-hunter in the creation; and would do any thing, however mean, or contemptible, to curry favor with a Countess, or to secure a nod at the Opera from a Peer. By these means, he contrived to linger in the outskirts of fashionable society; tolerated in some houses from the use they made of him, and getting into others under the protecting wing of some old college acquaintance, or of some man of fashion who had condescended to make him his jackal. He knew the whole peerage by sight; could discover the coronet on a carriage in the densest fog in November; had made himself acquainted with the topographical situation of every person's opera box, and would have made the best walking court guide in the world; since it did not claim acquaintance with the inmates, he knew the knocker and brass plate on the door of every fashionable mansion in town.

In this pursuit, Tadpole had cut his connexion with the class of society in which he was born; without having been able to graft himself upon that to which he aspired; so that he was laughed at by the sensible persons of the one, and despised by nearly the whole of the other; who seldom condescended to notice him, unless it was to borrow his money, or send him on an errand. Indeed, Tadpole might not unaptly have been designated the "errand-boy" of fashion. He had been uniformly blackballed at every club in London in which he could prevail upon any proposer and seconder to inscribe his name among the candidates; but yet he persisted in his pursuit, and the labor of a whole morning's walk or ride in the Park, was amply repaid by a nod from any one of the heads in the window at White's, or a "How d' ye do Tadpole?" from the supercilious voice of some galloping exquisite in the Park.

Langley's loss of fortune had at first lowered him considerably in the eyes of Mr. Tadpole; but, when he saw him still on the same familiar terms with his former associates, and still read his name in the morning papers among the fashionables who attended such and such an assembly, his whole importance was restored.

Langley, who knew Tadpole's character and failings, looked upon the present rencounter as a most fortunate circumstance. Here was a way to escape from a disagreeable office, and yet run no risk of offending his patron. Telling Tadpole, therefore, the story—pointing out the obligation Lord Orville would be under to him—complaining of his own want of vision, as incapacitating himself for performing the service; he secured in a moment a most willing proxy; to whom the idea of obliging a lord would have rendered a much more degrading task palatable.

"But shall I convey the intelligence myself to Orville House!" asked Tadpole, eagerly.

"Certainly," replied Langley.

"You won't forestall me?"

"No, no! but you will certainly miss her," said Langley.

"Blue pelise and cottage bonnet, you say?"

"Yes, yes!" and away flew Tadpole in the direction Mrs. Langley had taken; while Langley, intending the infirmity of his sight to form an apology to Orville; like many others, blinded himself into a species of consolation at doing his dirty work by deputy.

CHAPTER XIX.

LOVERS.

Scarcely any situation can be imagined more painful than that of poor Forrester. Loving Emily with his whole soul, conscious that none around her appreciated her value, nor bore her the same degree of real affection as himself, he was yet condemned to see her perpetually subject to the attention of others, and to follow her from party to party, without being able to gain one confidential communication. It was in vain that he watched for an opportunity; if chance presented one, he was sure to be disappointed by some instrusion on the part of one or the other of the Orville family.

He saw too, with fear, the change in her habits —mourned over the dissipation of the life she led —and dreaded lest the effect of the examples by which she was sourrounded should influence her future existence. Knowing as he had done, the excellence of her heart and principles, and sensible of the foundation upon which those principles were built, he felt secure that they could never be eradicated. Yet he trembled to think of the consequence of such perpetual round of gayety upon a heart and mind so young; he dreaded its unfitting her for a more domestic life, and that the excitement under which she now lived might by long continuance become necessary to her existence.

It was impossible, however, for Forrester to go on long without perceiving the change in Emily's manner towards himself. At first, he attributed it to the natural objection that every woman of delicacy feels towards making the sentiments or attentions of any man public; but at length her coldness, and the pleasure she seemed to enjoy in escaping from his attentions to those of Lord Orville, or, indeed, to those of any other of the gay beings, by whom she was now perpetually surrounded, almost confirmed his worst fears. Open, too, as Orville House was to him at all hours, he began to think it strange, that she herself did no make some opportunity for him to see her alone and, at length, the unpleasant truth forced itself

upon his observation, that, on the contrary, she herself sedulously avoided any thing like confidential communication. The certainty was a sad blow to poor Forrester; it deprived him of his last remaining hope; he saw all the prospects he had formed fade before him; and, what rendered it worse, he saw no hope that this destruction of his happiness would ensure that of Emily. Such was the nature of his love, that, could he have seen any reasonable prospect of her happiness being increased by the change, he would have tried to support his disappointment with fortitude. As it was, he gave himself up to despair, on her account as well as his own, '

Once admitting the idea of a change in her sentiments, it was astonishing how many proofs of the truth of this surmise forced themselves upon his mind. Doubt soon grew into certainty, and he determined to seek an interview; throw all upon the hazard of a last appeal; and, if successful, caution her against the insidious arts of Orville, and bid her farewell forever.

An opportunity for this appeal at length presented itself, when it was least expected. Entering the library at Orville House, he perceived Emily alone, evidently in deep thought. Once or twice she appeared agitated by some internal emotion: then, sighing, she exclaimed unconsciously, "I almost wish I were back again in the country!" forgetting every thing but the impulse of the moment. Forrester approached her hastily, and asked, "Can such a wish emanate from Miss Emily's heart?"

Emily started at the sight of him; looked as though she wished to escape; but, perceiving no hope of avoiding the interview, she merely exclaimed, "Bless me, Mr. Forrester!"

"*Mr.* Forrester! You were not wont to be so formal! it used to be Forrester—or Edward."

"Yes!" replied Emily. "I remember, Mr. Forrester, to have been sufficiently rude to have used your name too familiarly."

"Nay," said Forrester, mournfully, "Miss Hartley never could be rude; and the delicacies of her familiarity rendered its favor so great, that I must ever regret its loss."

"Mr. Forrester chooses to be complimentary," said Emily, rather satirically, and taking up the tone in which she had latterly often spoken of Forrester.

"It is unfortunately not in my power to be so," quietly replied Forrester: "and I remember the time, when sincerity possessed a greater influence than compliments, over your heart. I have long sought this opportunity of speaking with you alone: but, of late, you have been so surrounded by an idolizing multitude, that there has not been a moment to spare to him, who was once happy enough to consider his society as one of the pleasures of your former life."

"Why, I begin to find," said Emily, "that my former life, as you call it, was no life at all—that it was a mere dream."

"It is but too true," replied Forrester, "and I am at length awakened to the dreadful certainty that it was indeed some illusion of the brain."

"You are quite metaphorical, Mr. Forrester," coldly observed Emily, who assumed an indifference she was far from feeling, hoping that it might the sooner end an interview which was painful to both.

"Oh, Emily, Emily!" exclaimed Forrester, "this coldness, this indifference destroys me. But I come not to complain—I know my doom—yet hear me—hear me, Emily, if it be only for the last time."

"I am all attention, Mr. Forrester."

"Alas! Miss Hartley—I had much—much to say: and thought that I had summoned sufficient courage, as well as sufficiently tranquillized my feelings, to have given utterance to my sentiments, without discovering the bursting agonies of a disappointed heart."

"Agonies!" exclaimed Emily. "The prudent Mr. Forrester talk of agonies?"

"Ay, and feel them too—more, perhaps, than those who make a superior display of their sentiments," replied Forrester; "but no matter—I am but too sensible of the difference you must find in my plain, and perhaps homely expressions of affection, when compared with the elegance of those compliments which are now crowding daily upon your ear. I perceive, too, how my plain manners must sink in your estimation, when put in competition with those of a fashionable man—I feel all this—deeply, severely feel it—and deeply do I regret the folly that led me to hope so humble a being as myself could ever retain an interest in the heart of one so capable of attracting to her feet even the most brilliant competitors."

Emily felt more than she dared to acknowledge, even to herself; and in a softened tone, replied, "Indeed, Mr. Forrester, these circumstances exist only in your own imagination."

"No, no," said Forrester, mournfully; "they exist in sad reality. I am quite aware of it—I feel my inferiority—I cannot dress up my sentiments in that glowing language which gives plausibility to sophistry, and which would render truth irresistible."

"Nay, nay," said Emily, in a still softer voice; "such virtues and good sense as Mr. Forrester possesses, will always ensure the esteem they merit, would he but exert them in a direction where they could be properly appreciated."

"There is but one direction, Miss Hartley," replied Forrester, "in which I ever wished the few qualifications I possess, to gain an ascendancy—but one object in the world, to which I can sincerely and truly devote them. That object is lost to me; and all my hopes of happiness are blasted for ever."

"Nay, nay, Mr. Forrester," exclaimed Emily, in a tone almost of tenderness.

"Hold!" interrupted Forrester; "revive not the glimpse of a hope, which I know must be immediately extinguished. I see it in your altered manners—I read it in your frigid look—I understand and feel it, from a thousand circumstances that speak the truth of my surmises. Oh, Emily! when memory paints thee as thou once wert—kind—obliging—may I say affectionate?—When imagination pictures the smile with which you greeted me in the morning; the gentle sigh which the evening witnessed at our parting—when I retrace the circumstances of that evening, when I first dared to whisper in your ear a feeling warmer than that of fraternal love—it is then, Emily, that in these retrospections, I experienced sensations

nearly allied to phrensy—" and Forrester, betrayed by his feelings out of his usually calm exterior, actually sobbed with agony.

Emily, overcome by her own feelings, and giving way to a momentary burst of tenderness, exclaimed, "Oh Edward! dear Edward! spare me! spare me!"—

"'Edward! dear Edward!'" repeated Forrester, with delight; "and do I hear that name again from the lips of Emily? Oh repeat it, and I am your slave for ever."

"Oh Edward!—I know—I feel—I am wrong," said Emily.

"Wrong!—impossible. Nothing can be wrong when Emily's heart and understanding direct her actions."

"Pardon me the torture I have given to a sensible heart—a heart of which I feel myself unworthy; and the happiness of which I can never—"

"What do I hear? what says my Emily?" exclaimed Forrester.

"In the country," pursued Emily, "my natural disposition was repressed. The world—unhappily for me—has shown me what I am—our dispositions, Forrester, are dissimilar."

"No, no," interrupted Forrester. "In the country, my Emily was herself: here only, is she the creature of circumstance. Can you remember, in anticipating our future lives, how exactly our sentiments accorded? Do you remember in our studies, how perfectly our opinions coincided! Can you recollect our evening walks and conversations, and say that our hearts are dissimilar? True, I cannot display a blaze of wit that excites the admiration of my auditors—I have no personal accomplishments to dazzle the beholders, and make my wife the envy of her neighbors—I cannot dress up my affection in the fastidious term of modern sentiment; but I can proffer you the unalterable love of a manly heart, that will devote itself to your happiness; and, that happiness accomplished, will be the greatest I can possess."

During this passionate appeal, rendered more forcible by the general quietude of the character of him by whom it was made, Emily had been surprised by the return of so much of her former tenderness for Forrester. Her heart seemed to have wandered back into the track it had so grievously deserted. Former scenes rushed upon her remembrance; former feelings forced themselves upon her mind; and, in a voice, in which she seemed to resign herself to their influence, she exclaimed:—

"Oh, Forrester, I know the goodness of your heart; I feel the strength of its affection; I remember well our early life, and remember it with regret, even amid—" Emily was gradually giving way to her feelings. Forrester seemed to hang upon every word she uttered; her former affections and sentiments were evidently returning with their full force, and the countenance of Forrester was once more glowing with hope:—when Lord Orville suddenly entered the apartment, and started with surprise at seeing Emily and Forrester together. The moment Emily saw him, she became confused, she repeated the words "even amid, even amid," once or twice, and then, shrinking from Orville's glance, she finished by saying, "Ah, you here, my Lord?"

Forrester started, for so intent was he on Emily's words, that he had not perceived Orville's entrance. His countenance assumed its former expression of despair, and he internally exclaimed, "He here! then I am lost."

"You seem surprised at my presence, Miss Hartley," said Lord Orville, advancing towards them. "But, can you wonder, that the attraction which is sufficiently powerful to influence the grave, the wise, the prudent Edward Forrester, should draw within its vortex, the weak and volatile, though devoted Orville."

"You honor me too much," replied Forrester, endeavoring to regain some degree of composure, "by including one of such humble pretensions, with an individual, whose sphere of attraction is so extended as your Lordship's."

"Why, Miss Hartley," exclaimed Lord Orville, in a tone of affected surprise, "with what wand have you touched Forrester? I protest, Chesterfield himself could never have dressed up a compliment in better style; and, as we generally value these things by their scarcity, more than for their intrinsic worth, why, I think I must inscribe a compliment from Forrester as a rarity in my commonplace book."

"I believe, my Lord," said Emily, trying to rally herself, and to appear unconcerned, "that compliments in general deserve a commonplace reception."

Forrester had in vain struggled to resume his composure, and finding it utterly impossible to reduce the tone of his feelings so suddenly, he hastily took his leave; though not without betraying his agitation, and almost rushing out of the room. Emily herself could not quite conquer her feelings, though afraid of betraying them before Lord Orville, whose eye was fixed upon her varying countenance.

"You seem agitated, Miss Hartley," observed he; then, in a bantering tone, he proceeded: "What, I dare swear, Forrester has been recalling to your memory those halcyon days, when, like shepherds and shepherdesses of Arcadia, you wandered through dasied meadows and shady groves. I can easily imagine Forrester to play a sighing shepherd remarkably well, and to prove an excellent lover, for the country. I can readily believe now, that every tree in the neighborhood has bled with the characters of your name, which has regularly undergone a "course of bark," as Hood punningly calls it. I suppose the echoes have forgotten to respond to any other name but that of Emily; and that the murmuring streams have rolled their limpid waves but as an accompaniment to sapphic lays, chaunted in a voice, so musical and melancholy, that nightingales have left their native groves, and joined chorus."

"A truce, a truce, my Lord," said Emily, with a languid smile; while she inwardly shrunk from Orville's badinage;—who at once relinquishing his lighter tones, continued more earnestly:—

"And was such a mind and form as Miss Hartley's created only to be seen and enjoyed by rustics and nightingales? Was she blest with talents, that make her the delight of the gayest circles, only to display them where they can never be properly appreciated? or was the poignancy of her wit, given her but to satirise a few dowdy country neighbors; and fill up the scandalous chronicle of

a country tea-table? No, no, I will not do the world so much injustice as to place so fair a flower among those, which were born

——'To blush unseen,
And waste their sweetness on the desert air.'"

"Oh, my Lord, you overpower me," exclaimed Emily, "indeed you do. The country, I feel, was my proper sphere. I possess none of those elegant arts of society."

"Where nature has done so much," interrupted Lord Orville, "art is but an intruder, a little light reading under my direction, will soon brush off the prejudices of your country preceptress; who, unused to the world, is insensible to the burden which such sentiments are in society."

"Yes, my Lord, but these sentiments are for the well-being of society," said Emily.

"So, those who are prejudiced by them will tell you," replied Lord Orville. "So, the ill-natured cynic lays down the law; while the cold philosopher, devoid of passion and sensibility himself, preaches from the narrow precincts of his tub against their indulgence in others, with the calmness of a stoic; and calculates upon success, as a cabinet minister at home reckons upon an easy victory abroad; because he does not see the dangers and difficulties of the battle. The gods gave us our passions; men have had the presumption to impose customs which would violate the first principles of our nature. Which ought we to obey? Here," continued he, taking up an open volume, "see what Pope says on the master passion of our natures:—

'Love, free as air, at sight of human ties
Spreads her light wings——'"

"Oh, my Lord, forbear your arguments, lest you should dazzle me by their brilliancy, into a premature belief of their truth."

Lord Orville saw the power he possessed, at least over her imagination, if he had yet attained none over her heart or judgment; and, uncertain yet in his own mind, as to his intentions, he pursued his advantage recklessly, without giving it a thought, that if he ultimately fell into the plans of his mother, he was undermining the principles of his future wife. Orville, however, derived a pleasure in overturning established opinions, and in the subversion of received rules, even when he had no end to accomplish. There was a kind of recklessness in his philosophy, and of carelessness, with which he threw his powers of ridicule, even into the most sacred subjects, that delighted him, because it astonished others; and, with regard to women, he derived a selfish pleasure from winning affections which he had no intention of returning, and by which he had no hope of profiting. He could not, however, behold one so lovely and innocent as the girl who stood before him, without feeling something more than he had for most women; and ideas, beyond mere words, for a moment crossed his mind as he pursued his theme.

"Nay, Miss Hartley, I wish to owe your conversion to our modern tenets to conviction alone, and, where can you find greater conviction, than in your own feelings. Suppose that you, all trembling sensibility as you are, should find a congenial soul; and, that soul, inspired by affection, by passion, should pour forth its raptures at your feet; should seize your trembling hand thus, and lay it to a heart whose pulsations beat for you alone"—and here, having taken Emily by the hand, he appeared to be the impassioned lover he represented, when the door was suddenly opened, and, before either of them were aware of his presence, the Admiral stood before them.

Emily started, blushed, and was almost overcome by her emotion.

The Admiral was as much startled as herself; and exclaiming, "Avast there," and, stuttering out an excuse about sorrow and interruption, was retiring, when Lord Orville opening his box, coolly said:

"Oh! not at all, Admiral; I was only giving Miss Hartley some idea of natural philosophy."

"Experimental philosophy, you mean," said the Admiral, chuckling at his own joke, and then, recollecting his information, that an attachment existed between Emily and Forrester, he executed a loud whistle, and continued: "But, Miss Emily, since the wind lays in this quarter—"

"For heaven's sake, sir," interrupted Emily, almost overcome by her agitation. But the Admiral was on his usual tack of sincerity, and was not to be stopped; and continued:

"No, no, we must not have Forrester deceived any longer. He is a worthy fellow; though he is, perhaps, a little too moral and sentimental."

Emily was overcome with confusion at this plain sailing speech of the Admiral; and was attempting some stammering explanation, when Mr. Tadpole was announced: who, scarcely noticing Emily or the Admiral, in his haste to please Lord Orville, drew him aside, and in a half whisper, said,

"Well, my lord, I followed her home." Lord Orville looked surprised.

"Oh, Langley, you know, told me—blue pelisse, cottage bonnet—" and shaking his head significantly, he proceeded: "no fear from me. It was in vain she twitched round the corners, and bobbed up the alleys—determined to oblige your lordship, I traced her to a house in—" here his whispering became very low; "and, as I came away, who should I see enter, but Forrester—there's a sly dog for you!"

Lord Orville now comprehended, that Mr. Tadpole had performed the office which he had required at the hands of Langley; though how he became so commissioned, he was at a loss to conceive; but was delighted, by any means, to learn intelligence of his incognita.

Emily, who could not help hearing some part of what Mr. Tadpole said, started with a feeling almost akin to jealousy, as, from the little she gathered, she found the communication related to some female; and she inwardly asked herself, "Can he deceive me?"

The Admiral, who did not at all like the un ceremonious manner in which he had been treated by the intruder; and catching, here and there, a word or two of the communication, without hearing the truth sharply exclaimed:

"Eh, what's that about twitching and bobbing, and Forrester?"

"Oh, nothing, Admiral," coolly answered Lord Orville; "but that Tadpole was telling me that Forrester—didn't you say Forrester—?"

"Oh yes, Forrester," replied the civil Mr. Tad-

pole, delighted at the familiar manner in which Lord Orville had mentioned his name,—

"That Forrester desired him to follow some pretty woman home."

"Eh; how, my Lord?" exclaimed Tadpole: but was immediately silenced by a look from Orville, who proceeded:

"And he left Forrester there just now: was not that it, Tadpole?"

"Oh yes; just so; exactly so; just as your Lordship says; your Lordship is always in the right;" hastily said Tadpole, without knowing what he was asserting, only that he was agreeing with with a Lord.

"What exclaimed the Admiral, "Forrester, a gay deceiver? the specious fellow—the demure scoundrel; he, of all people, to be running riot!"

Emily had a mixed feeling at intelligence so unexpected; at this instant it would have pained her more to have discovered that Orville had deceived her, than to think that Forrester had been guilty of any dereliction; and, almost wanting an excuse for her own versatility, she experienced something like a pleasure in finding that apology for her own conduct in Forrester's change, which would have been denied her by his constancy. Happy, at any rate, to escape from the observation of the Admiral, she quitted the room, and hurried away to Clara, for the purpose of using this apology for the variation in her opinions with regard to Edward Forrester.

"D—n the fellow! One may swear at deception," said the Admiral. Then approaching Lord Orville, "My boy, give me your hand, for I love an open-hearted rake, as much as I despise a hypocritical libertine."

"Ay, Admiral," replied Orville, "you see it is not always the moral outside that hides the best heart."

"But I'll be about his ears—I wont let the son of my old friend turn out a scoundrel without telling him of it." And away bounced the Admiral in search of Forrester.

Mr. Tadpole, who had stood silent during the latter part of this scene, taken quite by surprise, looked at Orville for an explanation.

"Nothing but a hoax, Tadpole, a mere hoax, a joke upon Forrester's morality," said Orville. "But come, my dear fellow, we will take a stroll, and you shall tell me all the particulars." And away they went, the civil Mr. Tadpole well rewarded for the dirtiest action of which a man can be guilty, by walking down St. James's Street, arm in arm, with a peer.

CHAPTER XX.

THE MILLINER.

We must not, however, in our history of Emily and her suitors, forget the humble Caroline and her lover; for milliners have hearts as well as their betters, and they break *sometimes*. Caroline's story forms only an episode in our general history; and, perhaps some of my readers will recollect, that it is not the first time a pretty milliner has formed an episode in a man's life. "Where there is a will there is a way," is one of those proverbs, that, like most of the old adages, is a true one; and, however wayward the will may be, there are generally means, if industriously sought, sufficient to gratify it. Caroline Dormer had felt too much delight in the renewal of her intercourse with Hartley, to give up the continuance of it; and she was not long, therefore, before she found a person to whom she confided her secret, and who agreed to accompany her in her future interviews. This was the daughter of the humble and distant relative, who had received her on her arrival in town; and who had procured for her the situation in which Hartley had discovered her. The confidante was several years older than herself; and this was some salvo to the conscience of Caroline, and, in her eyes, made her presence, a more proper sanction for her meetings with Hartley, than if she had merely been of her own age. Fanny Thompson, however, though older, had not bought prudence, either with her years, or her experience; and could not but wonder at the folly of Caroline, in wishing her interviews with her lover thus to be intruded upon by a third person, who, according to her notions (I must not dignify them by the title of ideas) must spoil all the pleasure of the meeting. At any rate, this would have been her opinion of any third person who had been present at such interviews, when she too had lovers. At first, therefore, she attempted to argue Caroline out of the intention of being always accompanied, and to persuade her that it was but quite "right, natural, and proper," to use her own words, "to give the gentleman the meeting by herself." When, however, she found that, by accompanying her friend, she received sundry valuable presents, and became the partaker of many pleasures, of the enjoyment of which, she had no chance by any other means, she soon become content with the role of confidante, and contrived every means in her power to be as little "de trop" as possible.

Intimation that the "convenient friend" was found, was soon, therefore, conveyed to Hartley, who was not long in availing himself of the opportunities which this afforded him of seeing Caroline. From the moment he had discovered her, his heart had revolted at the idea of her menial situation, for in no other light could he consider it. He could not bear the idea of the woman he loved, working for her daily bread; and he used every argument in his power to induce her to quit it, and to accept the means of existence from himself, until some change, that might place them in a different position with regard to each other, should take place.

To this proposal, however, Coroline would not listen for a moment: circumstances, he had candidly told her, prevented his yet daring to propose their marriage to his family; and, till such a certainty as that occurred she determined to accept nothing from him, and prided herself on her humble independence. Not even a present beyond a plain locket with his bair, could he prevail upon her to accept, nor would she permit him to do any thing that could add to the comfort, or ameliorate the disagreeableness of her situation.

The circumstances to which Hartley alluded, were, in fact, precisely the same as they were when they last parted; but the additional knowledge of the world, which he had acquired since his entrance into life, and in the various scenes through which he had passed in his short career, had made the possibility of their marriage very debatable ground in his own mind. He had lived with a set of young men, who treated the marriage tie as a jest; to whom many a husband was only an object of pity or of ridicule; and who only looked upon matrimony as a method of extending their connexion, power, or fortune.

Nothing unhinges the morals of a young and inexperienced heart so much as this light conversation on serious subjects. Nothing loosens the influence of morality and religion in a mind, unused to think for itself, and to draw and act upon its own conclusions, more, than to hear sacred subjects treated jestingly and with levity.

The mind is shocked by open blasphemy, and shrinks from broad indelicacy; but the perpetual light shafts that are launched against serious subjects and institutions, in the common intercourse of conversation, soon undermine the respect which those feel for them, whose reverence is not founded on something stronger than that of mere habit or imitation.

Mortified as Hartley was at this determination of Caroline to owe him nothing but the pleasure derived from his society, it yet, almost unknown to himself, raised her in his estimation.

"The presents were therefore all transferred to Miss Fanny Thompson the confidante, who treated them, as Fatima's father does the camels in Colman's drama of Blue Beard, and seemed "to whip them in with their own tails," by the readiness with which she accepted them.

Caroline's hours of business—do not let polite ears be shocked, that one of our heroines is obliged to number such hours—occupied her from eight in the morning till eight in the evening, and those regulations which ordained this as the time to be devoted to labor, as well as the time at which she was expected to rejoin her companions at home, were both rigidly adhered to by Caroline, in spite of all the remonstrances, and sometimes anger of Hartley.

Her labor, however, now no longer hung heavy on her hands; she had recollections and anticipations to lighten their burden; her life was a life of hope again, and she counted the tedious hours as they passed; she had something to look forward to at the end of them, which promised her pleasure —and what a pleasure too! the society of the man she loved. Those women who have loved truly, will well know how much of pain such a pleasure will repay; and Hartley's passions, if not his affections, were sufficiently engaged, scarcely to let an evening elapse that he did not pass in the society of Caroline from eight till eleven. She was devotedly fond of music, he was careful, therefore, to secure a secluded box in one of the higher tiers for every opera night, where he was delighted at the pleasure she experienced, and surprised at the superior knowledge of the science which she evinced. On these nights the confidante whom he had supplied with a capital glass by Dolland, for that purpose, amused herself by admiring the dresses in the boxes, and counting the bald heads in the pit; and though she was insensible to the music of Mozart or Rossini, she was by no means indifferent to the dancing, which excited in her various inclinations to giggle, and exclamations of "Oh, my!" at the tremendous expose of limbs in "*Pirouettes renversées.*" She was, however, perpetually interrupting the tete-a-tete of the lovers, by inquiries as to who were the different occupiers of the boxes; a curiosity which Hartley was perfectly capable of gratifying, from his extensive intercourse in fashionable society. Fanny Thompson at length, however, became tired of the opera. It was a mighty dull piece of business; nothing but a parcel of music which gave her no pleasure, and all in a language which she did not understand; she therefore, at length, generally sought a refuge from ennui in sleep; a circumstance, upon which Hartley congratulated himself aloud; and which, we must own, did not create any thing like sorrow in Caroline.

On other evenings, when some performance at the English theatres promised greater entertainment than usual, a private box was provided; and here the confidante was much more at home. She would weep with Juliet or Belvidera, and laugh with Liston or Harley; enter into the drollery and pathos of Mathews, whose delineations of human nature come home to every man's bosom, and enjoy the vivacity of Yates; and drew comparisons between Drury Lane and Covent Garden, and the King's Theatre, not at all to the advantage of the latter. On fine nights, when the moon was bright and the air not too cold, the carriage would drive them to the gate of Hyde-park, or a mile or two into the country; where the few hours of Caroline's liberty were spent in walking with her lover by moonlight, and in the interchange of sentiments, which on these occasions was more delightful, and frequently more dangerous than in the midst of a crowded theatre, with other objects to distract her attention. Sometimes, but very seldom, and not till her confidence in Hartley had been fully established; would she accompany Fanny to his rooms in the Albany, where a petit souper (his dinner) was provided in the library; and here, perhaps, that domestic intercourse which was the consequence of evenings spent thus, tended, as much as anything, to rivet her affections still more closely. On these occasions, the hours were passed in conversations and reading; and by this interchange of their opinions, they thought they discovered a similarity of sentiment and feeling, which fitted them for each other. I say, thought; because when persons have an inclination for each other, they are too apt to imagine a congeniality, which in after times, they are surprised to find never existed in reality. Few people deceive themselves or others so much as lovers do. Thinking and wishing alike in one great point, they are too apt to take it for granted that their thoughts and wishes are the same upon all others; and the desire to please, while they are lovers, not only helps the deception, but frequently induces the adoption of each other's opinions as their own.

It was in these visits, that Caroline frequently surprised Hartley by the powers of her conversations, and by the extent of her acquirements, as well as pleased him by her proficiency at the piano. She might not execute with the precision of an ex-

pert player, or of one of those amateurs who fall a little short of the excellence of professors; but she played with a feeling which proved how much of her soul was in the occupation; and sang the plaintive ballads with which our native music abounds, in a style calculated to produce an effect, with which Miss Stevens herself might have been gratified. Her reading had been desultory, and the rudiments of that education instilled by her mother had not been regularly acted upon after that lady's decease. Historical reading had been mixed with romance; didactic studies had been mingled with poetry, and natural inclination leading her much more into the world of fiction, than the dry paths of dull truth, Caroline had formed her ideas of life more from romance than reality. Her father, whose sole ideas of education were bounded, like a true old Oxonian, by the classics, had indulged his own inclinations by giving her an insight into the literature of the ancients; so that, perhaps, though inferior to other women in some points, she was their superior in those which do not generally form portions of female acquirement. This kind of mixed education, and living much with her father, who was a man of profound erudition, had given her a strength of mind beyond her years; but the indulgence of her poetical inclinations had added to the tenderness of her disposition, and created a heart peculiarly formed to love, and to love devotedly.

These evenings were perhaps among the most pleasant, not only of those which Hartley passed with Caroline, but of those which he passed any where. It is true that eleven o'clock was too early an hour for such interviews to interfere materially with his engagements; but he always found the most splendid party insipid after quitting Caroline, whom he generally set down with her friend, in his way to his routs or quadrilles.

Their evening interviews were of course limited to the usual three hours; but on Sundays they spent the whole day together. On these mornings a carriage generally waited to receive Caroline and her friend in St. James's square, in which Hartley accompanied them to some one of those many pleasant places within a drive from the metropolis; always taking care to choose those, where they were not likely to encounter the pleasure-seeking cocknies. Here they enjoyed each other's society, admired the beauties of nature; and the only alloy to the pleasures of the day was the anticipation of parting in the evening. It was on these days that Caroline sometimes gave herself up to the full delight of her enjoyment of her lover's society; here she reposed in full security upon his arm, listened to his conversation, and, if her lips did not utter the fulness of her love, Hartley delighted to read it in her looks.

There were but two drawbacks upon the pleasures Hartley experienced in these interviews; the one arising from the uncertainty of his own meaning, motives, and intentions; and the other, from the interrupting presence of the eternal Fanny Thompson. She seemed to sit with her quiet face, like an incubus upon his pleasures; and it required all his innate politeness, and all his consideration for Caroline, to treat her with the civility which always characterized his behavior to her; for he was civil to her even at the moment he could have thrown her out of the opera box into the pit, or out of the windows of his chambers into the area, for the purpose of getting a few moments with Caroline alone. Yet, the poor woman did her best to make herself agreeable; she slept over a book in the Albany; shut her eyes, if she did not sleep, in the corner of the carriage, and kept her attention perpetually fixed on the stage at the theatre; still, there she was, and Monsieur Tonson was never a greater plague to the poor Frenchman in the Seven Dials, than his female namesake was to Hartley. It was in vain that he pleaded for her absence: in spite of the perfect confidence which she placed in the honor of her lover, Caroline was determined upon this point; it was the salvo to her conscience; the appui upon which she supported the apology for her interviews; and she would not give way to him in this instanee.

It is almost impossible to describe how much these repeated meetings increased the love of Caroline for Hartley. His undiminished and perpetual attentions; the delicacy with which he sought to give her pleasure, the respect which he paid to her person; and the superior conversation, and the intellectual delight which she enjoyed in her interviews with him; all tended to render her heart more devoted than ever, to the only man in whose favor it had experienced a feeling.

The contrast of these hours with those spent in her uninteresting labors, increased their effect upon her imagination; and although their enjoyment did not diminish her industry, they certainly sometimes rendered the time devoted to her daily occupations, a little more tedious.

This "*lutte*" between the virtue of a milliner, and the temptations which a gentleman has it in his power to offer her, we have always considered but a very unfair contest. It is a hawk pursuing a butterfly. A woman, with but little education, and condemned by the poverty of the situation in which she is born, to earn her bread by a laborious employment, unfortunately attracts by her beauty the attention of some sensualist of fashion. His rank in life, in his own opinion, gives him a right to make any attempt he pleases; and he is generally secure from the resentment of brothers and cousins, even should he excite that of the object of his pursuit. Let us imagine, however, what is very natural, and perhaps too generally the case; that the attentions of one superior rank are not disagreeable; and that a person in this situation is imprudent enough to permit their being paid; and, in time, to grant interviews, solicited under impressions of the heartlessness of which the poor girl is not aware.

Pleasures are procured for her, of the existence of which she was till this time ignorant; presents are made; and enjoyments offered, of a nature that her own situation in life must have for ever precluded; her leisure moments are spent in drives, theatres, and various pursuits, which disgust her with ordinary occupations; and in society which makes her look with contempt upon the every-day companions of her labor. Her ideas rise above her circumstances; no time is left for reflection; every thing that can gratify the senses, or accelerate the pleasures of the passing moment, are presented to her inexperience; and she falls a prey to the designing sensualist who has marked her for his own, and hunted her over paths of

flowers till his succeeding indifference withers them up, and leaves his victim nothing before her, but to retrace her steps through pain, humiliation, and repentance; or to pursue a career which must ultimately end in destruction.

It is suprising, what pains are taken by a certain set of men in the seduction of women of this class of society. During the pursuit nothing is spared; splendid promises are made, and believed; money is lavished in presents; like a victim destined to be immolated on the altar, every wish, however capricious, is gratified. But these efforts once crowned with success, how the scene changes! There is such a run at the Opera that there is no box to be procured—carriage horses are lame, or the cab under repair—a family is come to town, and a father may be offended at his absence—young men become suddenly filial who never thought of their parents before in their lives. In short, there is never wanting an excuse to avoid the performance of those promises which had misled; or to realize the anticipations, which had misguided the unfortunate girl. If she have a virtuous mind, and a sensitive heart, the disappointment ruins her health and spirits; and bitterness and remorse are her portion. If, on the contrary, all virtuous dispositions have been eradicated, and it has been her vanity and levity, rather than her affections, by which she has been deluded, she vents her spleen in reproaches, and pursues the same course with others.

Look into the lives of nine-tenths of those unfortunates who form decidedly the most pitiable class of society in the world; and you may trace a history similar to that which we have attempted above.

Caroline Dormer was, however, superior to any such temptations as these; and Hartley certainly was not guilty in his intentions towards her. They both felt the delight of being together, and Caroline derived her ideas of security, or rather never thought herself in danger, from the perfect confidence she placed in her lover. There was one thing neither of them ventured; they never anticipated; they reversed the Scripture phrase, and seemed to thing that "sufficient for the day was the good thereof." In this instance, at any rate, they thought with Seneca that it was wise "to enjoy the present without anxious dependence for the future."

Hartley never thought of the future at all; or, if he did, was totally unconscious of what it might produce; and, when it would force itself upon Caroline's mind, it was always sweetened by some romantic hope, that circumstances would at length favor their union.

In the mean time, their meetings became still more frequent. No opportunity of seeing each other was lost; till poor Fanny Thompson began herself to be almost tired of her part: and proffered a silent wish, that Mr. Hartley had some kind friend, who would take upon himself to relieve her from the tedium of the many hours she was compelled to pass with the lovers. Sometimes, the total neglect of the Sabbath duties, which this kind of life induced, gave a pang of momentary repentance to Caroline, as she recollected how differently that day was wont to be passed; but this was banished, the moment she saw Hartley's beaming eye and happy countenance, smiling his welcome, and his approbation at her punctuality, out of the carriage window; and was never remembered till the Sunday was over, and she was in bed, trying to recall every word that he uttered, and attempting to live over again the events and conversations of the day.

These meetings were, however, now to be interrupted by the illness of Fanny Thompson; who, having no ardor to defend her from damp evenings, caught cold from a water excursion with the lovers, and became so ill as to be confined to her bed with a rheumatic fever. Night after night did Caroline attend her three hours by her bedside; and physician after physician was sent by Hartley, in the hopes of effecting a speedy cure; still Fanny's "recreant limbs" refused their office. Flower of mustard, warm baths, flesh brushes, and Caroline's attentions were useless; the obstinate fever still maintained its ground; and during this period, Caroline was resolute in her determination not to see Hartley. It was in vain he pleaded; in vain he wrote; in vain he waylaid her in her nightly visits to her friend; he could obtain nothing but the privilege of a hurried walk with her from Regent street to Fanny's lodging, which was situated in some gothic street in Holborn.

The many, many times that Hartley had wished the confidante, or, as he designated her, the duenna, at the bottom of the sea; or seized with the gout, or the cramp, or any thing that would have prevented her from forming a trio with himself and Caroline, now occurred to his memory by way of punishment. He had little anticipated the possibility of the time arriving, when he should devoutly pray for the health and presence of the eternal Fanny Thompson. No bulletin, however, of a prince was more anxiously expected by a minister he patronized, and whose office depended on the master's convalescence, than the nightly and matinal report of the progress of Fanny Thompson's disorder. As for her mother, she was quite astonished at the constant inquiries of a dashing livery servant after the health of her daughter, and almost began to suspect that all was not quite right, and to question Fanny more particularly.

In the expectation that a few days would terminate her friend's illness, Caroline waited with patience, and adhered, without much difficulty, to her resolution to forego the pleasure of Hartley's society, and to deny him the usual interviews. But, as week after week passed on, without any amelioration of Fanny's complaint, the privation became almost too great for her to bear. She became irritable and impatient: memory painted the happy hours she had spent, and her feelings contrasted them wofully with the present. She became angry with herself—with Fanny—with the rheumatic fever—with the whole world. In the mean time, Hartley wrote to her daily; and in every letter became more and more urgent for a renewal of their intercourse. He recalled to her mind its innocence; he pictured to her the past prudence of his conduct; and was sometimes so hurried away by the impetuosity of his feelings, that none could have read his letters, and doubted his intentions of making Caroline his wife, although there was no explicit declaration of the kind. The hurried interviews, which he contrived in the street, only added to the irritation of both parties; since they were passed in violent pleadings and reproaches on his

part, and forced denials on hers; till, at length, they were both worked up to such a state of mutual excitement, that they were each of them almost in as great a fever as poor Fanny herself.

Caroline found her daily occupation more distasteful than ever. She became restless and uneasy; the days seemed interminable, and her nights were in reality sleepless; and Hartley's daily threatening and half angry letters preyed upon her mind.

As to Hartley, he alternately cursed the eternal fever of Fanny, and prayed for her recovery; then entreated, and then scolded Caroline; accused her of want of affection, of want of confidence, and scarcely ever quitted her, in their now short interviews, without leaving her in tears.

At length his perseverance began to prevail. Caroline recollected the reasons she had for confidence in him—her own heart sickened at the total absence of that intercourse, which had been so delicious, and from which she had derived so much pleasure, and pleaded for a partial revival of it. Fanny's recovery seemed farther removed than ever, and her delicacy prevented her venturing to make another confidant. Under all these circumstances, and unable herself to bear, with any degree of equanimity, the almost total absence which she had of late compelled herself to endure, she began to relent; and at length agreed to meet her lover once more, upon the first Sunday; upon the express stipulation, however, that it was only to be for a morning drive in his cabriolet.

Some may imagine, by the difficulty Caroline made in granting this meeting, or, indeed, at any time, in meeting Hartley alone, that she doubted either herself or her lover. But this was not the case. Caroline always looked forward, at some period or other, to be his wife; and, should that ever be the case, she knew that prudence, under the present circumstances, would excite and ensure future confidence and esteem; and, as the wife of Hartley, she wished to look back to her present trying situation, without having the slightest breach of delicacy with which to reproach herself.

Secure in Caroline's promise, Hartley tasted of the first real pleasure since the period of Fanny Thompson's illness; and though Caroline's heart trembled as she made it, she too derived some comfort at the anticipation of again seeing her lover as she had done. Thus they both anticipated the coming Sunday with anxiety; he all impatience, that made every intervening moment seem an age; and she with a trembling anticipation of the pleasure it was to bring her, that rather shortened than lengthened the hours she had to pass before it arrived.

At length came that Saturday night which closes the labors of the week; and away hurried the common world to their marketing, and the fashionable world to the completion of their weekly pleasures at the Opera. Caroline spent the evening by Fanny Thompson's bedside—Hartley whiled it away at the Opera; but neither of them counted that Saturday night as the best they had ever passed with regard to sleep.

CHAPTER XXI.

A SUNDAY.

Sunday! what a variety of sensations does this day of rest create.—How many, ere its morning dawns, throw up their sash windows, and cast an anxious glance towards the east, to ascertain whether it is to be rain or sunshine; whether the new pelisse and bonnet are to be sported, and returned unspotted to their domiciles of drawer and bandbox, where neatly papered, they are to rest while their mistress fags to be again brought into work, when she takes her pleasure; or whether these cherished garments are to be "drenched with envious rain." How many hearts flutter at the anticipation of what the pleasures of the day may produce; and how many would willingly prolong its hours through the remainder of the week, insensible that it derives more than half the enjoyment for which they prize it, from the very circumstance of its recurring but *once* in seven days.

Caroline had passed nearly a sleepless night; and when, worn out with watching, she sank for a few ments into forgetfulness, her dreams were any thing but pleasant. She rejoiced, therefore, that the morning avocation did not require her usual early rising, and contrary to her custom, she remained in her bed long after every other inmate of this dormitory of the industrious priestesses of this pandemonium had quitted their pillows, and congratulated each other on the promising prospect of a fine day, afforded by the blue sky, and by the reflected gleams of the sun, which shone upon the opposite attics.

Disturbed, however, by the whisking of kerchiefs and ribands, and by all the bustle of the toilet, which rendered the room a little Bable, as far as the confusion of tongues could make it so, she arose; and dressing herself all but her outer garment, she sat down quietly, or lent any assistance that her more impatient companions might require.

These, without having read any works on the division of labor, or made any abstruse calculation, upon the rule-of-three principle, that if one pair of hands can do so much within a given time, so many more could accomplish a larger quantity of work, had certainly hit upon some methods by which much time at the toilet was saved. As one instance of which, these young political economists laced each other's stays in a circle; by which means this operation was performed for six pair of Robinson's, or Vestirin's corsets, in precisely the same quantity of time that was necessary for the completion of one. Unluckily, the circle was a little disturbed on the morning in question, by the circumstance of one of the laces having suddenly given away at an additional twitch required by the superior rotundity of one of the young ladies; in consequence of which, the upright position of the fair operators was slightly disturbed; and they were thrown, on what a sailor would have called "their beam ends," by the necessary consequence of missing stays.

As for Caroline, she was not long suffered to remain idle. It was, "Oh, Miss Dormer, pin this

riband on"—"Dear Miss Dormer, tie my sash"—"Button my frock, there's a dear"—"Do now just take this stitch up, there's a love"—"Pray pull out my sleeves"—"Oh dear, do tuck in this little bit of white;" etcetera, etcetera; till the whole operation of the toilet was finished, and Caroline was again suffered to repose in quiet on the corner of the bed. During this process, many a fair face, while waiting for its turn at the single looking-glass allowed for their adornment, popped out of the window with an anxious glance towards the sky; while each, like the smooth surface of the silver lake, reflected the clouds, or brightness of the heavens, in the disappointment which appeared upon their brow, or the exultation which dwelt in their smiles, as hope or fear predominated as to rain or sunshine.

At length, all the ceremonials of lacing, tying, stitching, and arranging was finished, and the looking-glass left to its own reflections. Then arose other anxieties; no less than those experienced for the arrival of the beaux, for whom these operations of the toilet had been endured. Every head was now, therefore, stretched out of the windows to catch the first glimpse of the cicisbeo for the day; and each enjoyed her anticipations of the figure her beau might cut, in comparison with those of her companions.

At last a tilbury turns the corner. A general agitation proclaims that it comes for *one;* and a particular blush, or flush, or whatever that delightful suffusion may be called, which animates alike the countenance of the dutchess and the dairy-maid, in love and in hate, in anger and in delight, designates which that *one* is. "Oh Anna," exclaimed half a dozen at once, "it is Mr. Jenkins, I declare." Anna does not know the tilbury, for it is a different one every Sunday; she does not know the stud, for many and various are the black, white, and gray, geldings, mares, and galloways, with which the livery-stable keeper kindly permits her beau, to risk her neck, as well as his own, for the trifling remuneration of fifteen shillings for the day. But she does recognise the bright blue coat, with velvet collar to match; and Anglesey-colored wellingtons, which met her full approbation when first put on six months since; she does recognise the redundancy of frill which lies plaited between the stripes of his waistcoat; the shirt-collar which intrudes upon the well-trimmed whisker up to the ear, which looks a little "dog's eared" from the custom of wearing a pen behind it for six days out of the seven. She recognises also the bushy hair, poodled under the hat; and the cloak lined with scarlet, whose shag collar, of the same bright hue, hangs gracefully pendant over the back of the tilbury, hiding certain indications of shabbiness in the vehicle, and astonishing the country natives into temporary notions that its proprietor has some pretensions to military rank. Unacquainted with that dexterous turn of the wrist, and knowing near-side touch of the whip which brings stud and tilbury close up to the kirb, (for once a week is not sufficient practice for good tilbury driving,) he placed his horse in the same relative position to the door of his lady's domicile, that an inexperienced dancer places himself to his partner, when he has either pastourelled it too much, or pirouetted it too little, in a quadrille.

There was now a general shaking of hands—a little female kissing between bosom friends. "Good-by, Anna;" "a pleasant day, Anna;" and, "upon my word, Mr. Jenkins looks very well;" with other hastily uttered sentences, mingled with the leave-taking. A run to the glass gave the assurance that saucissons were all in order, and a run down stairs brought her to her lover; who, too careful, or too fearful, of his horse, to look up to the window, as he drove down the street, now for the first time gave his dulcinea's lilac spencer and pink plumes a look of approbation. Too sensible to quit his seat, and leave his horse at liberty, through any mistaken politeness; he yet ventures, for once, to transfer the reins to his whip hand, as too many are apt to do when a favorite female is in the way, while he stretched out the other by way of assistance to his fair companion. She placed her kid-colored palm in his, and her foot on the step; one jerk seated her in the valley formed between the driving seat and the side of the gig; a little adjustment arranged her garment modestly over the pretty silk clad ancles; a corner of the aforesaid cloak gave its military protection against any accidental joil, or zephyr; the parasol was waved up to the window by way of a last adieu; a few admonitory touches of the whip, very carefully administered, accompanied by a ya-up, soon induced the nag to put himself out of a stand-still, and off they started; the charioteer prudently deferring his how dy'e do's, and other greetings, till he should have got off the stones, and be in a good wide road, where he is in less danger of coming in contact with any rival Sunday jockey.

The attention of the party was now arrested by the appearance of a glass-coach, or rather a hackney coach without its number, which now slowly drew up to the door. From this carriage sprang three young men, in readiness to hand their respective demoiselles into the vehicle, the hire of which had been clubbed at seven shillings each, so that they had none of the cares of driving on their hands, to impede their impatience or politeness.

One of these new comers had, like our tilbury friend, a dash of the military, and was accordingly habited in a blue frock-coat, the edges and seams covered with black lace, at which his mistress always looked when she favored him with the air of "Should he upbraid;" while something resembling a duck's tail, but without its power of wagging, dangled at the bottom of his back. His black cravat is neatly fastened hy two turquoise pins, chaimed together as strongly as man and wife, while his heels display a pair of spurs, which gave their master the character of keeping a horse, without its attendant expense of rack and manger —for spurs eat nothing.

The second was of another order of beings—called, as well. He was clothed in top-boots, white corduroys, a waistcoat scored like a leg of pork, and a rough drab toggray, buttoned across the chest with mother-of-pearl buttons of the size of crown pieces, while a horse and jockey appear to be galloping over the ponderous folds of his shawl neckcloth, by way of broach.

The third beau was a complete contrast to the second; for having by some accident heard that stockings were dress, he appears ready-dressed for dinner at eight in the morning, with blue coat

thrown open, white waistcoat, black trowsers, and ribbed silk stockings.

Adieux were soon uttered to the remaining friends. The looking-glass was once more put in requisition, the door flew open, and the belles and beaux greeted each other by hearty shakes of the hand. They were soon hurried into the coach, which wriggled with their settlement into the seat, and proved what one of the females of the party called a "tight fit." The swell cried out, "All right, Jarvey!" The coachman woke from his momentary doze, and the patient horses walked off in a trot.

A prim, smirking-looking gentleman, seated exactly in the centre of a hackney-chariot, and of his shirt collar, the points of which endangered his eyes at every jolt; and most carefully avoiding any contact between the dirty lining of the vehicle and his well-brushed coat, carries off a fifth; while a short, thick-set, middle-aged man, with a blue coat of dimensions sufficiently ample for any two modern habits, his pockets looking like panniers, his corporation covered with an acre of black serge, which "the least taste in life" of Irish linen, divided from a pair of nankeen trowsers that reached to the middle of his white cotton stockings, by his diagonal crossing, seemed to direct his steps to the same house. But one now remained besides Caroline, and her white beaver bonnet was thrown back with disappointment, as she exclaimed, "dear me! here's Pa, instead of——" The name died on her lips. The elderly gentleman was the only one who was compelled to knock at the door, or who was kept for a moment waiting.

"Well, good-by, Miss Dormer! sorry to leave you alone so solentary," was uttered in a tone of sympathy, and with a little more feeling than if she had been fetched by her lover instead of her father. She tripped slowly down stairs, opened the door, and found her hand suddenly twitched under her Papa's arm, and tightly confined between the elbow and the rib; while the ideas of the Park and Kensington Gardens fade before the prospect of the parish church or meeting house, and a dull cup of tea in the parlor behind the shop.

This young lady's mamma had been in the same line with her daughter in her younger days, and from her recollections of what happened to herself, made her good man go after "their Sophy," to preserve her from the same perils. The good woman herself is too prudent to mention her reasons for this caution, which are perhaps too well guessed by the husband—"experientia docet."

Caroline was now left alone. She had been too much occupied by her own thoughts to share in the hilarity of her companions, which was, however, at all times quite dissonant with her ideas of pleasure. She had, however, cheerfully contributed her assistance to the toilet, and with sincerity wished them the pleasant day they expected; though she could scarcely prevent a smile of contempt from playing upon her full red lip as she contemplated their vulgar delights. As she lost sight of her last companion she began slowly to complete her own toilet, for which she had sufficient leisure, since several hours were yet to elapse before her politer lover would be in readiness to receive her. Caroline needed not much of the "foreign aid of ornament;" her beauty was of that cast which derives no aid from decoration; the simpler her attire the better she appeared, and the simplicity as well as correctness of her own taste, taught her that she was, "when unadorned adorned the most." Female vanity is, however, never entirely asleep upon this point; and as her features were reflected in the mirror, she could not help feeling the advantageous contrast which their regularity and expression exhibited, to the red, white, and plump cheeks of her companions. Theirs was the beauty of health, hers that of sentiment.

There was the dark, liquid eye, and blood-red lip, that bespeak a soul of deep feeling; the large ivory forehead, over which hung long curls of raven black hair, that reached to and rested upon the bosom—rendered whiter by the contrast; the pale cheek, that never exhibited the color of the rose, unless called there by passion and feeling; the arched and dark brow; were all that species of female loveliness which an artist would have selected to portray a Gulnare; and which, in the higher walks of life, would have given their possessor a place in that Gallery of Beauty which the "on dits" of the day say is preparing, to rival those which graced a gallery of the same description in the time of Charles II.

Little as Caroline had to do at her dressing table, she yet lingered over her toilet, eking out all its minor occupations, so as to lessen, as much as possible, the hours that she should have to wait, between the time of its completion and the coming of her lover. At length, however, every pin was placed: every fold adjusted: there no longer remained an excuse for another moment's lingering. Casting, therefore, one more look in the glass; taking up her bonnet, and throwing her shawl over her arm, she descended to the first floor, which, serving as a show-room all the week, was set apart as the young ladies' drawing-room on Sundays.

Just as she entered the room, the striking of St. James's clock forced upon her mind the painful recollection of the length of time that must elapse before Hartley was to come; and, for a moment she envied her companions, at least, the early rising of their lovers.

After pacing the room, a little impatiently, a few times, and casting an anxious glance at the window, as a few light clouds would now and then, for a moment, obscure the sun, she threw herself upon the sofa with a determination to wait with patience; and, who is there that has not frequently made this resolution, and as frequently broken it? Still Caroline's heart beat violently: she trembled, she knew not why, at the step she was about to take; and more than once wavered in her purpose. But then came over her the recollection of Hartley's love; the fear of his anger; the knowledge of his honor and prudence; and, above all, her own knowledge and confidence in her own innocence; and she could not bear to inflict upon him the pain of disappointment, and perhaps did not like to bear it herself. Besides, it was but a drive for an hour or two; and poor Hartley had behaved so well, and undergone such privations lately; and then Fanny Thompson would be sure to be well by the next Sunday; and this, therefore, was the only time there would be a necessity for her seeing him alone. Still

it was breaking through a resolution, founded upon her ideas of the preservation of self-respect; and she was uneasy.

The sudden tolling of the bell for church recalled to her mind, at this moment, all her long forgotten duties. There was an association in the sound with all her recollections of early days, when it was the signal for her father and herself, to pursue their quiet path across the meadows that led to his parish church. There, she was wont to help him to robe in the vestry, with the assistance of the aged clerk, who had cried Amen in the same desk for nearly sixty years. The pleasant meads; the meandering stream that ran through them; the peasantry doffing their hats, and bobbing their courtesies, as they passed; the vestry, with its bare walls and heavy-mullioned windows, almost obscured by the thick clusters of ivy which time had created there; the trembling hand of old Adam, as he assisted her in putting on the surplice: and, above all, the holy quiet of the humble church, as she slid silently into her pew, and sunk upon the hassock in a momentary prayer of preparation; all came over her mind with an intensity, and seemed to lie before her with a vividness, that, contrasting it with the present tumult of her heart, she buried her face with her hands, and burst into tears.

As she recovered from this burst of feeling, her eyes rested upon some books of devotion, which lay mingled with some novels on the mantle-shelf. She recollected the consolation she had derived from their perusal in the two great griefs of her life—the death of her parents and her supposed desertion by Hartley; and she attempted to read them now, but their effect was lost. Her heart was cold to the influence of religion. The same subject was tasteless in the present state of her mind, and she again sat absorbed in her own feelings of mingled impatience for her lover's coming, and fear of his arrival. At length one of those seducing volumes in boards, with Andrew's name on the back, yclept a novel, attracted her notice, and taking the book from the shelf, she sat down to it doggedly, with the determination to read. The subject of this book was more in accordance with the state of her mind. It was the history of a love not unlike her own, and she soon became interested in the fate of the heroine, and fancied a similar denouement in her own case. That clock, however, which during her impatience had given such painful note of the slow progress of time, at length struck the three quarters; she listened in vain for the fourth; but no; there were still fifteen minutes to elapse. But Hartley was generally early; generally before his time. The book was thrown away. The hat and scarf were laid where they could be the more readily seized when wanted. Her movements up and down the room now became quicker; her glances out of the window were no longer directed to the sky; at the rattle of every carriage she involuntarily approached the balcony: and, as it passed, and its sound died away in the distance, so faded the flush of hope from her countenance.

"No, no," she exclaimed, "he will not come before his time." The hour itself struck, and she raised her hands in thankfulness that the painful time of suspense was past.

As the sound of the clock died upon her ear, a sickening sensation came over her; a trembling anticipation that he might not come; and in that moment of agitation she felt, for the first time, how ardently she loved Hartley. She now listened and looked with an eagerness that was painful to both sight and hearing; and almost uttered an exclamation of joy as she saw the cabriolet turn the corner of the street. The calash was up to its fullest extent of concealment; nothing was discernible from within but the dove-colored kid gloves of the driver, dexterously and gently managing the fine high-spirited bay, whose veins, starting through his silky skin, proclaims the excellence of his blood, while his bone renders it rather questionable, whether, like some of our noble families, he has not had it strengthened from some source not quite so pure as that of his ancestry.

As she glanced at the well-appointed equipage, she could not help for a moment drawing a comparison between the elegant cabriolet of her lover, and the dislocated tilbury of her humbler companion. It was, however, but the thought of a moment, or only served to remind her of the greater difference between herself and her lover; and Hartley would have been all in all to her, had he possessed no equipage, and nothing but himself and his affections to give her.

Her scarf was now hurriedly and carelessly thrown over her shoulder; her bonnet loosely tied, without even and appeal to the glass; and she rushed to the door. As the clock struck the quarter, however, she paused for a moment: female pride seemed to have a temporary influence over her, and she determined Hartley should not perceive her impatience.

A few minutes, however, brought her to the carriage, which was carefully drawn up close to the curb in the quiet of St. James's square; the ponderous knee-board opened, and the next moment she was seated by the side of her lover, panting with the agitation of pleasure, mingled with the fear of having been seen. The knee-board was closed, Caroline drew the oilskin curtain, so as to render the concealment a little more effectual, and the steed, obedient to the rein, started at a brisk peace.

A rapid trot of a few miles cleared them from all the dust and incumbrances which the metropolitan roads generally exhibit on a Sunday, and they found themselves in a retired spot with a beautiful country before them.

The horse was now reined in, the oilskin curtain drawn aside, and the calash thrown one fold back, so as to give them air, and a better view of the scenery by which they were surrounded. They had now time for their mutual greetings: and Hartley was more than usually animated in his expressions of delight at their being together again in all the confidence of mutual intercourse. Caroline blushed, and smiled her sympathy with him in this feeling; and had certainly never looked so beautiful in the eyes of her lover. His presence had driven away all the presentiments by which she had been oppressed, her spirits became exhilirated, she openly expressed the happiness of her heart, and abandoned herself to the innocent enjoyment of the moment.

In Caroline's ideas, the sun had never shone so brilliantly; the sky never looked so bright; the

flowers never bloomed so freshly and sweetly as they did on that day. She discovered a thousand beauties in the landscape, which had before escaped the observation; all things took their color from the complexion of her own mind; and that was so filled with pleasure and happiness, that every thing was "couleur de rose."—In this state of enjoyment, they proceeded, chatting, laughing, and sighing by turns; and neither of them regretting the absence of Fany Thompson, who, with her rheumatic fever, appeared to have been entirely forgotten, till, arriving at the brow of a hill, the horse himself stopped to remind his master that a cabriolet was not a tilbury; and Hartley permitted him to rest, that he and Caroline might enjoy, at their leisure, the beauty of the extensive prospect before them.

It was a lovely day in the commencement of June; the summer sun shone splendidly, and lighted up with its rays the rippling waves of our noble river, that flowed majestically in the distance. The cattle had sought a shelter in the shade; every thing bespoke that stillness which is only felt on a summer's day. Nothing living was to be seen except the fly, whose buzzing rather added to than disturbed the repose of the scene; while the new-mown hay, strewed lightly over the surrounding meadows, or gathered into cocks, sent a delicious perfume through the air, that stole over the senses with a degree of voluptuousness, which those only can conceive who have experienced its effects.

As Caroline contemplated the scene before her, and felt its calmness; as she looked at the humble village which lay at their feet, and saw the blue smoke curling and mingling with the clear ether of the atmosphere, as it rose through the patches of plantation in which the cottages were situated; a wish stole over her mind that she could be the inhabitant of one of them with Hartley for her companion. At this wish, and the knowledge of its futility, a sigh escaped her bosom, and her dark eye filled with a tear, which might have found its way down her cheek, had not Hartley stopped it at its source, as lovers sometimes do stop their mistresses' tears when they are permitted to do so. Here these lovers seemed as though they could linger forever; the horse was, however, no lover; and betrayed his impatience to proceed by sundry snortings and pawings; and on Hartley's representing the real necessity for giving him a few minutes' rest and some food, Caroline consented to descend the hill to the village that lay at its foot, instead of immediately turning back agreeably to her first proposition; for she could not bear the idea of distressing a noble animal who performed his duty so well.

In the most beautiful spot of this retired village, a little removed from the rest of the houses, a little inn was designated by the caricature of a lamb, which swung backwards and forwards from a high post on the opposite side of the road. It was a neat, white, cottage-looking house, with green verandahs along its front and sides, and the whole displaying an appearance of domestic comfort that induced them to alight while the horse was taken to the stable to be dressed; an operation which Hartley said was absolutely necessary.

An obsequious, fat, and good-natured landlady ushered them into a parlor at the back part of the inn, which, hanging over a gentle trout stream, commanded one of the prettiest prospects of the surrounding country. The parlor was furnished in a style very superior to any thing indicated by the outside of the inn. There was almost every luxury which graces a modern drawing-room, although in a rustic form. This was accounted for by the landlady's telling them that it was used as a fishing house during the season by some veteran disciples of old Isaac Walton, who valued their comfort as much as their fishing. The whole had indeed such an air of neatness, snugness, and comfort, that it was enough to tempt the stay of any stray traveller who had happened to harbor there; and a knowing person would have easily imagined that it was not Hartley's first visit, though he expressed quite as much surprise at the appearance of the place as Caroline herself.

The clock now announced an hour so late that it was impossible for Caroline to think of getting back in any time for the family dinner, which was always provided in the establishment; and she was at length prevailed upon by Hartley to allow him to order that meal for them there, which the officious landlady promised should be got ready while they took a stroll through the meadows.

This arrangement completed, arm in arm, and sometimes, in the more retired spots, even more familiarly, they wandered for a short delicious hour by the side of the stream that ran through the village; now contemplating the prospect—now anticipating future happiness, though never forgetting the enjoyments of the present. Hartley was more tender, more respectful than usual—Caroline more loving more confiding. Their hearts seemed wrapped up in each other; and certainly that of Caroline had not another feeling, nor her imagination another thought, but those she experienced for her lover. She hung upon his arm; she listened to his accents; she smiled her approbation of his sprightlier sallies, and her eyes suffused with tears, and her cheeks flushed with a maiden's pleasure at his tender protestations; and thus they wandered on, till the signal from the village inn recalled them to their dinner in the delightful little parlor, rendered still more pleasant by the murmuring of the stream that rolled its clear waves beneath its windows.

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The moon was shining brightly in the dark blue sky, with its light now and then hid by the gossamer clouds that hurried over it, when Hartley's cubriolet was seen slowly returning through one of the green lanes which it had perambulated in the morning. The horse was as prancing and spirited as at the commencement of the journey; but a cloud had come over the happiness of those whom he was bearing to their homes. Hartley was silent and thoughtful; his face appeared flushed; and he sometimes checked his steed with an impatience that betrayed some internal agitation. Caroline had sunk into the corner of the cabriolet; her face was buried in her handkerchief, and her bosom heaved with convulsive sobs. If for a moment her bashful eyes fell upon the clear white light of the moon, she shrunk from it as though ashamed to meet its rays. The passage of the clouds, which created a moment's darkness, seemed a relief. She would then shrinkingly approach Hartley, lay her

beating temple on his shoulder, and appear to seek his protection as the only blessing, the only safety in the wide world. A pressure of the hand or of the head tenderly against his bosom was the only reply he made to this silent appeal.

As the cabriolet approached town, and the lamp-lighted streets met her eyes, she sobbed more convulsively; but by a great effort overcame her agitation, as she drew near her home. At length the cabriolet stopped; the time of the parting now came; a moment or two elapsed before Caroline could summon sufficient courage to leave the carriage. One convulsive grasp of the hand, and a mutual, scarcely articulated "God bless you," was all that passed. Strange anomaly! the victim and the destroyer calling down the blessing of the Almighty.

Hartley lashed his steed into almost a gallop. Caroline hurried to the door of her residence. She slid by the servant who admitted her, and stole in darkness to her bed; glad that the lateness of the hour enabled her to do so unperceived by her companions, who were long since reposing in sound slumbers, fatigued by the pleasures of the day. Here she again gave way to her grief, and wetted her pillow with the bitterest tears that a woman can shed. The clouds had passed away, and the full moon shone brightly into her eyes:

> But none shall see the day,
> When the clouds shall pass away,
> Which that dark hour left on the maiden's name.

CHAPTER XXII.

VARIOUS.

Lady Orville went on weaving her webs, and laying her plans, only to have them rendered abortive by the very person for whose advantage she intended them. It was in vain that she lectured Lady Sophia. That young lady was willing enough to marry Hartley, because she saw all the advantages of the match. None knew better than she did the merits of fifteen thousand a year, and a peerage in reversion; none appreciated more than she did the various appendages of such an income, and such an expectancy. A house in Grosvenor-Square, and a place in the country; temporary establishments at Cheltenham in the autumn, and at Brighton in the winter; a box at the opera; a subscription at Almacks; and all the other indispensables to married happiness, were all duly prized by Lady Sophia; and she knew that she could not be happy without all this; and that a union with Hartley would ensure them. But then, it was too much to give up waltzing with Henry Fitzroy; gallopading with Lord Henry Mildmay; riding with the guardsmen; and flirting with the Conde di Altemira. Where was the use of being young, handsome, and witty, if she could not be gay, coquettish, and satirical? It was quite unreasonable in Mr. Hartley, or any other Mr., and more particularly of her mamma, who had not yet given up flirting herself, to require that she should resign the privileges of youth, beauty, and animal spirits.

It was in vain that Lady Orville told her that the privation was only for a time; that the moment the marriage knot was tied, she might flirt, and dance, and ride as much, and with whom she pleased; Lady Sophia saw the advantages, and wished for their enjoyment, but had not courage enough to give up temporary pleasures, for what her mother called permanent advantages. Besides, of late, Hartley had always come in just as their parties were breaking up; had quitted them almost immediately; and always appeared perfectly *distrait*. We can account for that, although Lady Sophia could not; and though he was never so agreeable as a dozen other men she could rank among her admirers, it is true that Hartley might have done very well for a husband, could she have secured him without much trouble; but for an agreeable flirtation, he was, in Lady Sophia's opinion, "toute autre chose."

Thus, Lady Orville saw one of her favorite plans very likely to be thwarted; for she felt but too sensibly that, to succeed, Hartley must be completely enthralled, before the establishment of Mr. and Lady Emily Hartley in town. She knew that herself and family would appear in a very different light to Lady Emily, when viewed amid the pursuits of London, than when merely seen in their annual visits to the Grove; where she had always artfully conformed to Lady Emily's sentiments.—She had calculated upon the rapid effect of the new mode of life upon the minds of two such young people, and had depended upon bringing these matches to a conclusion (so far as the inclinations of the parties were concerned,) before the Hartley family came to London. This event had been delayed by the disinclination that Lady Emily felt again to embark in the great world, which Lady Orville's bringing out her daughter had in some measure rendered, for the present unnecessary.

Such a woman as Lady Orville shrunk from the scrutiny of such a mind as Lady Emily's, and felt the thinness of her veil of artifice before one who had no artifice herself. In London, every one was so occupied in playing their own games, that they had seldom time to detect the play of others; scarcely any one traded openly upon their real motives. The only dependence Lady Orville had, was upon that uprightness of Lady Emily's mind, which would prevent her suspicion of the contrary in another person: thus, like all engaged in a career of vice and deception, tacitly acknowledging the virtue it is preying upon, or plotting against.

As to the Admiral, the ease with which the good old gentleman was misled, had relieved her from many of the difficulties which his presence had at first thrown in the way of her plans; and the idea he had imbibed of Orville's and Emily's love for each other, and of the deception of Forrester, rather tended to facilitate their union, which would decidedly have been accomplished but for the levity, or something worse, with which Orville treated the whole affair.

The Admiral expressing his firm conviction of any attachment between the young people to Lady Emily, the Countess knew would go a great way

towards accelerating her wishes. The scene, of which he had been a witness in the library, had certainly impressed him with this notion, as far as Orville and Emily were concerned; but not all Lady Orville's assertions could prevail upon him to think the laughing, high-spirited Sophia dying in love for Hartley. It was in vain she endeavoured to prove that these spirits were forced, to conceal the real sentiments of her heart, from the fear of their not being mutual. The Admiral knew something about "the worm in the bud," as he said, "concealment did not seem to prey on the damask cheek;" and he could not reconcile the dashing careless ease, and glow of full health which characterized Sophia's person and manner, with his ideas of a love-sick damsel; neither could he conceive the necessity of waltzing with a dozen men at night, riding with a dozen others in the morning, and flirting with every one who came in her way, even to the old gentleman himself, for the mere purpose of concealing a passion, which her mother asserted was secretly preying upon her heart, and undermining her health and spirits.

Lady Orville would have had her daughter counterfeit a little appearance of the love-sick maiden, to have deceived the Admiral; but if she ever attempted this, her naturally boisterous and satirical disposition had entirely spoiled the effect.

Thus were her favorite schemes counteracted by the very persons to whom she naturally looked as coadjutors; and she even now began to doubt the accomplishment of the marriage between her son and Emily, from the circumstance of his becoming much more careless of preserving the influence he had evidently attained over her mind.

The fact was, that Orville was one of those persons upon whose minds a fancy acts with the force of a passion. Two or three times in his life, this feeling or caprice had been excited in so great a degree, as to induce him to give up every other pursuit until the prevailing fancy was gratified, and he was now thus influenced by the fancy which he had taken for his fair incognita. He had spoken to Mrs. Langley but for a few minutes, but he had been so struck by her demeanor, and by her beauty, of that peculiar style that he admired the most, that, unused to control his passions or baulk his fancy, he determined to leave nothing untried to gratify the inclination she had excited. Tadpole's having seen Forrester enter the house, gave him some notion that he was in some way connected with her history; and the idea of again rivalling him gave a zest to his pursuit.

All the information which the convenient Tadpole could gain was that Mrs. Roberts, the name by which Langley was known at his lodgings, led a very retired life; that her *husband* (a particular stress laid upon this word by Tadpole, so as to give a doubt as to the correctness of the title) quitted her every morning, and never returned till very late at night; generally indeed after the household had retired to rest. That his manners and address were very superior to those of the good lady's other inmates, and not at all like a common second floor lodger's. But not one word could Tadpole make out detrimental to her character, or at all indicative of any levity of conduct, that could induce Orville to suppose that any open addresses would be received. His notions of woman, were, however, formed by the worst of those with whom he associated; and as some political philosopher has said that "every man had his price;" so was it Orville's creed, that every woman was to be won, only attack her in the right way. Indeed, his estimation of the sex in general was at so low an ebb, that he used to say with the poet, that

> ———— "Gifts and giving,
> Will melt the chastest-seeming female living."

CHAPTER XXIII.

RIVALS.

Of all the miserable lives that are led in this world of ours, there is scarcely any to compare with that of a lover. I do not mean one of those namby-pamby lovers, whose affections are skin-deep, and whose vows are lip-deep,—who make love *selon les regles*, and get over a refusal by a trip to the Continent, or forget a disappointment in the arms of a mistress. No, no! these are not lovers; but let the heart once be completely engaged, let the mind once fix its only hope of happiness on a woman, and I defy any one to point out a man in the world, who, even under the most fortunate circumstances, is not doomed to endure more miseries than that of Tantalus, in the suspense, uncertainty, and caprice which he will have to encounter.

Women, why or wherefore, it is difficult to define, seem to triumph as much in the misery they can inflict, as in the happiness they have it in their power to bestow; and to judge of the strength of a man's affection, by the agonies he endures, more than by the pleasures he enjoys. As to a hackney-coach horse, which I take to be about as miserable a creature as exists in this very merciful world, its life is a mere sinecure in comparison with that of a lover. His fare finished, he takes his place on the stand and munches his oats out of his nosebag in peace and quietness. But a lover, "God save the mark!" his fair never lets him rest; if she loves him she teazes him with her caprices and her jealousies; if she is uncertain of her sentiments, she leads him on and on in uncertainty and suspense till she has made up her mind, and perhaps discards him at the very moment he expects the acceptance of his vows; and if from the first, she cannot return his affection, female vanity cannot resist the temptation of showing off her conquest, and leading her lover, like a Roman conqueror, to swell the number of captives in her train, and rattle his chains to the tune of her caprice.

Poor Forrester, at any rate, felt the agonies of a lover to be not merely imaginary—tortured by suspense, the certainty of Emily's change was almost more than he could endure. He did, however, endure it, and with a manly firmness that deserved a better fate. Certain at length of the futility of his hopes, and of the loss of his own happiness, he crushed the agonizing, though selfish feelings of his bosom, and turned his thoughts to the happiness of her he loved so truly; and felt a pang at the danger

which threatened her peace of mind, almost as great as that which he had experienced at the destruction of his own.

He saw how Emily was dazzled by the brilliant attentions of Lord Orville, and knowing that nobleman's principles and actions, with regard to women, he trembled lest she was following an ignis fatuus that would lead her to destruction. Not that Forrester for a moment dreamt of Lord Orville's success in any dishonorable intention; but he dreaded the enthralment of Emily's affections by one who was notoriously not a marrying man.

He saw that any warning which he hinted to Emily herself was attributed to jealousy. He dreaded creating unhappiness in the breast of Mr. and Lady Emily Hartley too much to venture to disturb their serenity by his fears, and he found her brother too much in the tramels of Orville's temptations to hope anything from him. Yet he saw Emily standing on the brink of a precipice; on the point of giving her best affections to a man whom he knew to be heartless; and, cruelly as she had treated him, he could not endure the idea of leaving her to the chance of such a fate as might be reserved for her, should she love him and find her love unreturned. In the midst of all his sufferings, Forrester had never blamed Emily; he saw the effect of the new life she was leading upon her young mind— he perceived the arts and blandishments by which she was surrounded—he confessed his own inferiority to the other competitors for her favor, and he considered the change which had taken place in her heart but natural, and found a thousand excuses for that which had destroyed his happiness.

At length, Forrester determined on an appeal to Lord Orville himself: as an old acquaintance and fellow-collegian, he thought that he might request some explanation of his intentions; and as a friend of the Hartley family, he felt it his duty to make some struggle to preserve Emily from such a fate as he feared might await her, should Lord Orville have no serious meaning in the attentions he paid her. To do this he was sensible would require great command both of his temper and his feelings but the recollection of his motives, and the hope that the result might be beneficial to Emily, enabled him to conquer both, and arguing himself into a frame of mind proper for such an extraordinary interview, he sought Lord Orville.

Orville was in his library writing billets-doux, on papers as various in their colors as the mistresses to whom they were addressed were in their character and dispositions; for he was one of those heartless beings, a man of general intrigue, without a feeling for any one woman in particular. Orville's fancy had been the only feeling that had as yet ever been excited by the other sex; he was too thoroughly selfish to be capable of that generosity which is the characteristic of true affection.

Emily's beauty and innocence had perhaps made a deeper impression on his mind than any woman had yet done; the contrast of her artlessness with the *ruse* manners of those to whom he had been accustomed; gave the zest of novelty to her attractions; and the idea of successfully rivalling his old friend Forrester, added to the gratification he felt in knowing that he was not viewed by her with indifference.

The fact was, that Orville disliked the straightforward character of Forrester, which he considered a satire upon his own; and he was angry that he could not *feel* that contempt for him, which he was anxious to show to others, by the badinage with which he always treated him. He easily saw that Forrester's whole soul was wrapped up in Emily; that he had given her his best affections— that his sole hope of happiness rested upon her; and he gloried in being the means of overturning this hope, without any serious intentions of profiting himself by the change which he hoped to work in Emily's affections. The increased seriousness of Forrester's countenance and tone of voice as he entered the library could not fail to attract the attention of Lord Orville, as they exchanged the customary salutations of the morning, which were immediately succeeded by Forrester's requesting Lord Orville's serious attention for a few moments.

"Serious attention!" exclaimed Orville. "If I am to be so contrary to my nature as to be serious, I am glad, Forrester, that you have limited the period of my gravity to a few minutes. You sententious moralists really expect such light-minded mortals as myself to imitate your gravity!"

This tone of badinage jarred upon Forrester's feelings, and in some measure disconcerted him. He began likewise to feel that he had no ostensible authority to require the explanation he was about to demand. Conscious, however, of the rectitude of his intentions, and his certainty of Emily's danger being increased by the number of notes, evidently to and from women, that strewed the desk that was open before Orville, and which he was now closing, preparatory to his conversation with Forrester, he derived fresh courage, and proceeded:

"I am afraid, my Lord, that my plain and blunt manners will very little assimilate with those by which you are so constantly addressed; yet I trust you will look through the surface of my conduct to its motives, and find a sufficient apology in them."

"Oh the prudent Forrester's conduct can never need any apology in the eyes of such a giddy fellow as myself; except, indeed, that its wisdom is, perhaps, too strong a satire upon the folly of my own," said Orville.

"For once, my Lord, I pray a truce to your badinage. Let it suffice that you triumph in it when others are present to appreciate your wit and my deficiency. I wish to put a plain question, and shall be obliged if you will honor me with a direct, and, if possible, a decisive answer," said Forrester, with added earnestness, and increasing agitation, as he approached the subject upon which, in his mind, so much depended.

"Question! question!" cried Lord Orville, imitating that cry in the House of Commons; "an appeal to the Lords, I declare."

This unfeeling continuance of the same tone almost roused Forrester's indignation; but, feeling how much depended on keeping his temper, he restrained his feelings, and hastily said, "Will your Lordship have the kindness to inform me whether your intentions are serious with regard to Miss Hartley?"

Lord Orville affected to start although he had been perfectly aware of the nature of the question

Forrester was about to put. Then, in a tone of coxcombry he proceeded, "Serious?—why, really, I have scarcely ever taken the trouble to analyse any of my intentions with regard to women. I generally leave these things to the 'march of circumstances,' as political writers would call it—"

"Nay,—nay, my Lord—pray answer me—I entreat you—for your attentions are too evident not to be directed by your own will. I feel it to be a plain, perhaps a blunt question; and I again refer you to my motives as its apology."

"Well, then, Forrester," said Orville, "to adopt your own style of gravity, will you tell me by what authority you ask me this plain question?" A pause ensued, when Lord Orville proceeded: "Am I to answer you as a lover and a rival?"

"No, no!" hastily replied Forrester; "as neither. All ideas of rivalry are past. I come not as a rival; I come not as a lover: for I must be both without a hope of success. That I have loved Miss Hartley—ardently, sincerely loved her—is known to her family—herself—and to the world; but I have exerted my endeavors, and have reduced my feelings to those of friendship."

"Very prudently done, and worthy of the philosophical Forrester," observed Lord Orville, with an approving nod.

"It is that friendship," proceeded Forrester, "which has induced my present visit. Miss Hartley's happiness is my object; and though my hopes of constituting that happiness have vanished, my warmest wishes for its existence, and my determination to preserve it, still remain."

"And what, in the name of wonder, do you dread from me?" asked Lord Orville, half superciliously.

"I dread," replied Forrester, "that Miss Hartley's inexperience in the world, and ignorance of your character, may attribute your evident attentions to other motives than the real ones, and that she may construe the elegance of a compliment into an expression of affection. I dread, lest the sensibility of her heart may be aroused by these attentions, before she is herself aware of it; and, should they be unmeaning, I know those sensibilities to be sufficiently acute to render her miserable."

"Mr. Forrester," said Lord Orville, gravely, "you now compell me to be serious. Once for all, the moment I understand the capacity in which you question me, I may, perhaps, be induced to answer you. If you demand it as a rival—"

"That, my Lord." interrupted Forrester, "I have already denied—for, ill-directed indeed is that passion which can make the object of its love the subject of a public dispute. I despise the man whose arguments lie in a bullet, and whose word is only sustained at the point of the sword. No! were it any other man than yourself, Lord Orville, under the supposition that you were preferred, I should relinquish my hopes, and retire without a question."

"But with me?" was rather looked than asked by Orville.

"With you," pursued Forrester, "it is different. For, without any hope of ultimate success in a dishonorable intention, you are not satisfied without inspiring a passion which can never be honorably gratified, and from which you can derive no benefit, but the useless—and allow me to say—unmanly knowledge of your own power."

"A very Seneca, I declare! a second Daniel come to judgment. Why, Forrester, you are a walking philanthropist."

"And can you," continued Forrester, "for the unsatisfactory gratification of a selfish vanity, risk the destruction of the happiness of such a being as Emily Hartley?"

"The destruction of her happiness! Nothing is farther from my intention, I assure you, than the *destruction* of Miss Hartley's happiness. But why should I not be selfish? It is the principle of mankind! self is the universal axis on which every thing turns; and I hate singularity," said Lord Orville.

"Nay, nay, my Lord, degrade not your nature to so low an ebb. There are feelings of generosity in our hearts, which raise us above the level on which you would place us; but mere selfishness is right earth, for earth alone stands fast on its own centre; all things that have affinity with the heavens move around the centre of another—"

"My selfishness has then an affinity with the heavens," retorted Lord Orville; "for woman is its centre of attraction, and I revolve around it."

"But the bodies to which the philosopher alludes," replied Forrester, "revolve upon the centre of others to benefit—you to destroy them."

At this moment, the door of the library opened, and Emily herself, the object of this discussion, entered the room, with a book in her hand, as though for the purpose of changing a volume. She started at seeing Orville and Forrester, and would have retired, stammering some apology about expecting to find the room unoccupied. Lord Orville, however, advanced towards her, and preventing her retreat, said, "Nay, Miss Hartley, you must not leave us; you are just come in time to thank your knight-errant, who like the hero of La Mancha, has been defending you against the dangers his own imagination has created."

Forrester, greatly agitated, attempted to stop Lord Orville, who continued, however, in spite of him—

"Oh, it would be mere selfishness—right earth, you know—to keep the arguments of your gallantry to myself, and to prevent their reaching that heavenly body they were intended to benefit. Here, Miss Hartley, has Forrester been combating the attentions which my heart and your own attractions have induced me to pay you as my mother's guest, with as much fury, and as little justice, as Don Quixote attacked the windmills, or the harmless sheep."

"Insidious coxcomb!" trembled on the lips of the agitated Forrester; but the presence of Emily restrained him.

"Mr. Forrester," exclaimed Emily, with heightened color, and a haughty tone, "after what has passed; after what I have also heard of your conduct, you must be conscious that this interference with my name is officious, at least, to give no harsher term to it."

"Oh, Miss Hartley," replied Forrester, "torture me not by expressions, as undeserved, as they are harsh and agonizing. I have been influenced, and Lord knows it, only by my wishes for your honor and happiness."

"I can preserve them both, sir, without the assistance of Mr. Forrester," said Emily coldly.

"Heaven grant you may!" ejaculated her lover. "The first I never doubted. It was my tender anxiety for the latter, that has called down your present censure on me."

"As for you, my Lord," turning to Lord Orville, his indignant feelings flashing from his eyes, "your insidious baseness now renders a personal explanation necessary, and I shall seek it in a proper place."

"Sir," retorted Lord Orville, "were any other name in question than that of Miss Hartley, I might, perhaps, make as haughty a reply to your remark as it deserves."

"Oh, for heaven's sake, my Lord!" cried Emily: but he continued:

"But ill directed indeed, must that passion be which can make the object of its love the subject of a public dispute; and I despise the man whose arguments lie in a bullet, or whose word is sustained at the point of his sword."

"What a just, what a noble sentiment! to prefer the real reputation of a woman to fantastic ideas of imaginary honor," ejaculated Emily.

Forrester, at hearing his own words thus turned against himself, could no longer restrain his indignation; giving a glance of mingled fierceness and contempt at Lord Orville, he exclaimed,

"I feel, sir, that my truth is unable to cope with your cunning; that was a part of your Lordship's character I had yet to learn. Miss Hartley, I have never yet ventured to warn you against that character, because I thought there was nobility even about its errors. But I have been mistaken. Beware of him; beware his talents; beware his insidious attentions. I know that while the wand of the enchanter is upon you, I cannot break his spell; but truth shall wither up the envenomed flowers which hide the serpent from your view, ere his coil is so strongly woven round your heart, as to leave its poison there for ever."

And so saying, he quitted the room, startling Emily almost into conviction of his truth by his energy, and throwing even Lord Orville in some measure from the balance of his equanimity. "'Sdeath, this is not to be borne." exclaimed Orville; and making an attempt to follow him, he was detained by Emily.

"No, no, my Lord, follow him not. He speaks but in the intemperance of disappointment. Nay, I beseech you for heaven's sake—for my sake—."

"For your sake?" said Orville, "That is indeed a plea I know not how to resist. For your sake I could indeed bear much. But should he repeat this in the world, what will repay me for the scorn I must endure? Will she, for whose sake I consent to run the risk of it, repay me by her smiles? Will her eye beam with kindness when that of the world shall be averted with scorn?"

"Oh, my Lord, urge me not now," entreated Emily; "I am unfit; agitated; let me retire; leave me to myself, I beseech you; yet promise that you will avoid all intercourse with Mr. Forrester."

"I promise," replied Lord Orville, "and should we meet accidentally, will only tell him your anxiety for his safety."

"I am anxious for both," rejoined Emily; "and I am sure Lord Orville will not forget that my name may be compromised by any dispute of which I am the unfortunate occasion."

With this Lord Orville permitted her to retire, anxious to put in execution his attempt at an interview with his fair incognita; whom from the circumstances of Forrester's having been seen entering the house, he half suspected to be the object of some liaison of his rival's; so apt is the mind of one man to form a judgment of the actions of another from a recollection of his own.

As for Emily, it was sometime before she could recover the agitation which this scene had occasioned. Her mind was filled with doubts; her decision and her judgment perplexed. There was a flash of indignant truth in Forrester's eye, and a brust of virtuous indignation in his parting speech, that almost carried conviction of his sincerity to her heart. She had known him too from her infancy; could he so long have played the hypocrite? yet had she not heard by accident, and from a stranger, of conduct that proved him to be one; and did not her own vascillating conduct require that he should be so, to justify the change which had taken place in her feelings? Yet why was not Lord Orville more explicit; why did he confine his attention to expressions of admiration; to exclamations of pleasure; to covert hints of her power over him, without any declaration that could enable her to define his meaning or intention. Could he deceive her? Here indeed was mortification, if not wretchedness! Then arose that comparison between the person, manners, and talents of the rivals, which was always so favorable to Orville; and she gave her belief to the sincerity of him whom she wished to find sincere.

Oh woman, why do you suffer your eyes to guide your judgment? why permit your heart to influence your reason? why prefer the tinsel of modern accomplishment to the more intrinsic merit of a correct mind and a sound discretion? Yet, why ask these questions, which may be answered by the finale in our Church Service, "as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever will be."

CHAPTER XXIV.

PATRONAGE.

There is scarcely any thing in life so painful in the feeling, or so melancholy in the contemplation, as the affectation of high spirits and of gayety while the heart is breaking beneath; as the forced smile of mirth, while the tear of misery is trembling in the eye; or the necessity for the assumption and appearance of careless hilarity, while the mind is writhing under disappointment and misfortune.

This was precisely the situation of poor Langley. His mistaken notion, that he should at length attain the accomplishment of his views through some high connexion, drove him into society where he was sensible that his position was preserved only by the wit and spirit of his conversation. He was blind to the heartlessness of those persons who

welcomed him only as long as he could conduce to their entertainment; and imagined himself to be making friends in those who only sought him as a companion to season by his wit the pleasures of their table, to entertain the company by which it was surrounded, and to be cast off like one of their champaign bottles, as useless and worthless the moment that its exhilarating qualities were exhausted.

He was too apt to take the cordial shakes of the hand with which he was greeted, as marks of real friendship, instead of the mere common greetings of society, bestowed alike on every one: and as he had never yet been burthensome to his friends, he was still considered a good fellow, though a poor devil, by the men of fashion with whom he associated.

Every body said, "Poor Langley," but nobody thought of relieving his poverty. All the gayety of Langley was only on the surface; a convulsive sob would frequently stop the laugh which accompanied one of his own sallies, and when he had set the table in a roar, his own heart was breaking. The very scenes in which he lived, the very society he frequented, the splendid banquets of which he partook, were all so many reproaches to him, when he thought of the situation of his wife and child, and of the actual penury of the position in which he was placed.

Still Langley had not felt that which is perhaps the bitterest pang that unaccustomed poverty has to bear; that which is technically and heartlessly called "cutting." He had never given his friends the privilege, the pleasure, or the pain of saying *no*, by asking any favors of them; for it is a privilege, a pleasure, or a pain, according to the disposition of the person who utters it; and the length of time which had elapsed without his having done this, had given even those, who had at first dreaded that their friendship might be called into active exertion by his application to them in his misfortunes, a confidence in his forbearance, which induced an increased cordiality on their part. Yet there was not one of them who was ignorant of his situation, and of the extreme reduction of his circumstances, and who were not wasting their influence, and bestowing their patronage, on far less deserving, though more obtrusive persons.

By this conduct Langley had preserved his independence, but he had likewise increased his poverty, which at the time of his application to Orville was such, that it was only by the strictest economy that he had managed to make his diminished finances meet the extra expenses rendered necessary by the birth of his child. The sum of money saved from the wreck of his former fortune was now nearly exhausted, and absolute want must have been his portion, unless some lucky change occurred. He was, however, buoyed up by the hopes he derived from Lord Orville's liberal promises; and although he considered it exceedingly unlucky that his Lordship should be out daily just at the time of his call, he never deemed himself the victim of one of those "not at homes," with which Tadpole and a few others of his casual acquaintance were so continually greeted at the doors of the great. When they did meet, Lord Orville never allowed Langley the pain of reminding him of his promise, for he found it much the easiest method of getting rid of the question, by first alluding to it himself, and this he always did, by saying, "Ah, Langley! I have been about your business—every thing is *en train*—but patience is necessary, a little patience and we shall succeed." Such a greeting as this was sure to stop any further question on the part of Langley; and it was upon such a speech that he fed his hopes till the next meeting, when he was sure to be greeted by another to the same effect. This was sufficient proof that Lord Orville bore his application in mind, and that was all that Langley could expect at present. He therefore went on in the same career of hoping, till "hope deferred made his heart sick," and he began to droop under his increasing and accumulating distresses.

The few tradesmen, too, to whom he was indebted, not knowing his residence, began to annoy him at his club; where, among the many three cornered and other elegant shaped billets of invitation, sealed with various devices of wax in different colors, he now found some very ugly, long, square-looking epistles, closed with large splashes of wafer, the contents of which made poor Langley anything but content. They generally began, "Mr. Langley, sir, your account for 18——having so long remained unpaid, we shall be obliged by an immediate settlement, and remain your humble servants to command," Humble servants? In time Langley knew these letters by instinct, and generally thrust them unopened into his pocket, where they remained, till, in a fit of desparte courage, he would read and answer them by an apologetic epistle that obtained him a few weeks longer grace. Death and our creditors are always sure to find us in the long run, even though we should have no "local habitation" to which they can address themselves.

Still Langley lived upon hope, concealed his poverty went on in the same career, kept up the same connexions, and was still the same pleasant companion which every where secured his welcome, But he became thin and pale; his cheek exhibited that hectic flush which betrays the want of health and peace of mind; his eye grew dim, and his brow compressed with the cares which corroded his heart; and he frequently left the society which his wit had rendered gay, to weep in the solitude of his own reflections.

Some circumstances had likewise given him a new uneasiness with respect to his wife; she had been absent several times, when he had accidentally returned home during the day, without, as usual, accounting to him, by telling where she had been; and once or twice, the maid had told him that a strange gentleman had inquired for her. Langley's confidence in his wife was unbounded; but he felt that his situation and pursuits had never permitted him to pay her the proper attentions of a husband, and that this peculiar position laid her open to misrepresentation, and perhaps, to insult; and this, added to a naturally jealous disposition, where his affections were concerned, sometimes rendered him very uneasy.

In the mean time, Langley, quite unconscious of any change in the sentiments of his patron, went on in the same way, and lived the same life; only that his heart grew sicker every day with disappointed hope, and that his waking thoughts

every morning became still more melancholy and foreboding.

His wife saw this, and prepared for the worst. It was in vain that Langley tried to keep up the same spirits at home that he exhibited abroad. There is nothing so quick-sighted as affection, particularly the affection of a woman, and Mrs. Langley saw the bitter feelings of disappointment that made him writhe under his assumed smile. He yet, nowever, continued to depend on Lord Orville's almost daily promises; though at last he forebore to repeat them to his wife, upon whom they had long ceased to have any effect. She, however, did her best, not only to keep up her own spirits, but to keep her husband's hopes alive; and would not add to his uneasiness by telling him the pertinacity with which she had been watched, and the various insults she had received, though she little imagined that her husband's patron and her persecutor were the same person.

CHAPTER XXV.

FURNISHED LODGINGS.

From the moment that he had seen Mrs. Langley, Lord Orville watched most assiduously for an opportunity of obtaining another interview; and having succeeded in meeting her twice or three times, the idea of her beauty had so increased upon, and influenced his imagination, that he determined, at all hazards, to attempt its possession. The modesty and dignity with which she had repressed his advances, and the total seclusion which she at length adopted to avoid them, rather than tell her husband that which might involve him in additional difficulty, and which she knew would distress him uselessly, only added additional impetus to his exertions.

It is true that he was, in some measure, misled by the information that Tadpole had given him, into the idea that she was a companion and not a wife; and his notion that a woman, who had once been frail, only required another temptation, and another opportunity, to repeat her frailty, gave him, in his own mind, every chance of success.

Her retirement he attributed to affectation: and the difficulties which she threw in his way, he considered only as so many acts to enhance the value of his prize. An habitual libertine has very loose ideas of female virtue, and seldom believes in its existence. Orville, too, had found the power of gold over the female mind, not, perhaps, administered as a bribe to any thing but their vanities! and he knew that more women are misled by vanity than by any other feeling.

With these sentiments, Orville had little doubt of success. He therefore set to work to lay regular siege to his fair incognita, or to her whom he knew only under the assumed name of Mrs. Roberts.

Every body knows that lodging-house keepers in London are not the most immaculate people in the world. Like the Italian inn-keeper, they do not always insist upon seeing the marriage certificate of the various couples who domicile under their roof. The punctual payment of the rent, and a convenient blindness to certain extra charges, with which they eke out their weekly bills, are the principal ingredients of their notions of respectability, and constitute, in their minds, a proper lodger. Mrs. Letsom, in whose house Langley had taken lodgings for his wife, was a thorough-bred woman of this class. She had a large portly person, with a fiery face, always ready for an obsequious smile, or a bullying frown, whichever would the best serve her purpose. Her bills were always delivered with such a determined air, that the unfortunate person against whose name Mrs. Letsom had put her £. s. d. saw that any thing like altercation would be useless, and any hope of abatement nugatory. The only thing that was seen of her husband, who was a little man, was his name upon a small brass plate in the lower part of the door, and himself sneaking out at eight o'clock in the morning, and coming in with a single knock at nine o'clock in the evening; the intervening hours being spent in some counting-house, where he was happy to seek a refuge from the managing persecution of his better half, and to earn a weekly stipend of one pound one, with which he purchased her good-humor on a Saturday night, and secured himself a little peace on Sunday. It is true that Mr. Letsom's name was on the parish books; but it was Mrs. Letsom that was all in all; she paid the rent, rates, and taxes; she preferred her complaints against the negligence of watchmen and street-keepers, and was considered by her neighbors a very hard-working notable woman, and at the same time a very lucky one, as her lodgings were seldom vacant.

When Mr. and Mrs. Langley first took her second floor, under the name of Roberts, they appeared so "vastly genteel," to use her own phrase, and paid down their earnest money so handsomely, that she inquired no farther. Their faces and their conduct were sufficient letters of recommendation, and the punctuality with which all her demands were discharged, was in her mind the best evidence of their moral rectitude. The only thing which had ever displeased her, was the impossibility of treating them with her usual familiarity, and of being at all intimate with Mrs. Langley.

With her first floor people she had seldom been admitted to, and, indeed, seldom sought any other intercourse than the payment of her bills, as she naturally considered them above her; but, with her second floor she had generally been used to gossip, and sometimes take a cup of tea; which had never been the case with the present lodgers, and this Mrs. Letsom held somewhat in dudgeon.

We have seen, however, that poor Langley's resources had been gradually diminishing. and his wife's confinement from the weak state of her health, had led him into such a variety of unanticipated expenses, that the rent, with Mr. Letsom's etceteras, was not quite so punctually discharged as formerly. At first Mrs. Letsom naturally supposed this might arise from accident, but when his want of punctuality had occurred two or three times, she began, in her own elegant phrase, "to smell a rat," and to think that all was not quite right She sud-

denly recollected that she had required no references; and, although the year and a half that they had lived under her roof they had conducted themselves so quietly and respectably, that even the most fastidious of London landladies might have been satisfied, yet during that period they had never asked her to "so much as a cup of tea," although they had no other visiters of any sort or kind. The latter circumstance, which had heretofore been a matter of congratulation to the scouring propensities of Mrs. Letsom, since it made the Saturday's scrub last the longer, and go the farther, now struck her as remarkable: she recollected too, that Mrs. Roberts was a very pretty woman, and that Mr. Roberts scarcely ever spent any other part of his time, excepting the nights, in the house. All this became suddenly mighty suspicious, and the virtue of the good landlady was beginning to take the alarm, and her fears to be raised for the hitherto immaculate respectability of No. 3.

It was about this period that, Orville's emissaries having watched in vain for two or three days without catching even a glimpse of the object of their vigilance, either in the street, or at the window; and, tired of the very little progress that had been made by his sapper and miner, Tadpole, and the very inefficient information he obtained through the same means, determined him to prosecute the adventure himself.

Leaving his horses therefore in the square, that was in the vicinity of Langley's domicile, for, in this metropolis, splendor is a very near neighbor to poverty, he soon arrived at the door, and ascertained that he was right, by the name of Letsom, now almost effaced from the plate by the rubbing which it underwent every morning from the robust hands of Mrs. Letsom's maid of all work. That lady, as she saw her "good name" thus gradually vanishing under the influence of scouring-paper, had once or twice spoken of purchasing a new plate; but as she looked at the weakly state of her domestic partner, she bethought herself that the letters would last quite as long as the good man himself, and that she had therefore better wait, and get a new brass plate and a new husband together.

Mrs. Letsom was in the midst of her cogitations about her second floor lodgers, and in the act of slicing a round of toast for her first floor, when Lord Orville's smart rap at the door almost caused her to drop the loaf, and to cut her fingers; or, as she pithily and elegantly expressed it, made her almost "cut more than she could eat." Thinking, however, that such a knock was of course to her first floor, she resumed her occupation. On the street door being opened, Lord Orville merely said, "Any body at home? Oh, in the parlor; very well; I'll find my way;" he passed the maid, who was astonished at what she called his "imperence," till she found he was really a gentleman, and then she called it "perliteness."

"Betty, Betty, what is all that there noise about?" roared out Mrs. Letsom, at the top of her voice, when the parlor door was opened, and Orville entered.

There was that in Lord Orville's appearance which so evidently bore the impress of a gentleman, that there was no mistaking it; his person, manners, and movements required no adjuncts from dress to convince those whom he addressed that he was a man of rank and consequence. He wore those marks of aristocracy in the bearing of his whole person, which Lord Byron has said may be discovered in the "fingers' ends."

The half familiar, half respecful bow, with which he uttered, "Mrs. Letsom, I presume," and the air with which he took off his hat, at once soothed the lady's ire at the temporary bustle in her hall; down went her voice from the discordant pitch it had assumed, to the sweetest and lowest note it could command; down went the loaf, down went the knife, down went the tucked up corners of her gown, and down went Mrs. Letsom herself to her lowest and best courtesy, as she said—

"Yes, sir; very much at your service, sir. Pray be seated, sir."

"Allow me to place you a chair, madam;" said Lord Orville, as he handed one from the side of the room to the side of the fire; while she officiously dusted and placed another opposite for his own occupation.

"Upon my word! a nice, snug, compact mansion, and a very pleasant situation, my good Mrs. Letsom," said Lord Orville, looking out of the window at a dull, black, blank, dirty wall, which reared itself within a few feet, as the gable end of the chapel of ease to the parish; "not liable to be overlooked either."

"Not at all, sir, except of a Sunday, during divine service, by the charity children. That's the windy of their gallery," said Mrs. Letsom: "To be sure, to make up for that, you can hear them sing; ay, and almost hear the parson preach too, without the trouble of going to church."

"That must be remarkably convenient," observed Orville.

"Oh, very convenient," replied the landlady: "and then you can see every berring that comes, from all my upper windys, rain or shine, without budging a foot."

"That is certainly very lively," observed Lord Orville: "You let lodgings, I believe, Mrs. Letsom?"

"Yes sir, very much at your service; and very sorry I am too, for your sake, as well as my own, that they are all full. There's my first floor, quite genteel people—has a gig of their own—at least, I believe 'tis their own; for it comes every Sunday, and it is always the same; and that doesn't look like a hir'd un, you know, sir—does it now?" said Mrs. Letsom, in a breath.

"Certainly not. I should think your judgment correct upon the subject of the gig in your first floor," replied Lord Orville; "but your second floor, Mrs. Letsom?"

"Oh, for my second floor, if you would put up with that, I think I might be able to accommodate you in a week or two; for I was just a thinking that I should be obliged to give them people a notice to quit," said the good landlady, adding another five shillings per week, in her imagination, to the already exorbitant rent produced by the two rooms and the closet, dignified with the name of dressing-room, which constituted the conveniences of the floor in question.

"It is not exactly about your lodgings, my good Mrs. Letsom, but about your inmates, that I have taken this liberty of making your acquaintance. I wish to know something about your second-floor

lodgers," said Orville, carefully watching Mrs. Letsom's countenance, to ascertain whether there was any risk of offending her, should he try to engage her in the promotion of his wishes.

"Something about my second-floor lodgers?" repeated Mrs. Letsom.

"Yes; you have a remarkably pretty woman there, I think; and I am a little anxious to obtain some information respecting her—that is, if I can prevail upon my good Mrs. Letsom to be as good-natured and kind, as her appearance bespeaks her to be," pursued Lord Orville, still watching the landlady's countenance, which was now lighted up by a smile of knowing consciousness and cunning that soon convinced him he might go any lengths he pleased with her.

"What, Mrs. Roberts?" said she.

"The same," replied Orville; "I confess that she has raised my curiosity."

During these few last questions Mrs. Letsom had scanned the person of her visiter more particularly, and began to think him superior to any lodging that No. 3 could boast. His white hand flourished a whip, which, with his spurs attachés, bespoke him the master of a horse, if not horses; one of the fingers of the said white hand also displayed a diamond, that almost dazzled her as it glanced brightly in the reflection of the fire; and white pocket handkerchief, too, distributed such a perfume as had never before regaled the nostrils of Mrs. Letsom, and which seemed, to her olfactory judgment, like the smell of a true gentleman; all these observations had their due effect upon the mind of the landlady, an effect that was not at all diminished by a person and features seldom surpassed in manly beauty. Seeing at once through the whole drift of his visit, she simperingly said,

"Well—you ra'al gentlemen are sich gentlemen for the ladies; where will you all go to?"

This sentence set Lord Orville quite at his ease with regard to any qualms he might have felt as to employing Mrs. Letsom as a means of communication. He soon knew quite as much of her lodgers as she did herself; and indeed a great deal more than she knew to any certainty. But the fact of the rent not being paid had made Mrs. Letsom quite capable of suspecting any and every thing; and she argued from these premises, together with other circumstances, that most likely "Mrs. Roberts was not a lawfully married woman."

From the description which Mrs. Letsom gave of Mr. Roberts, Lord Orville was soon convinced that it was not Forrester; although Tadpole had certainly seen him enter the house. It, however, tended rather to increase a suspicion that had once or twice crossed his mind, that Langley played him false, and was himself the cher ami of Mrs. Roberts; for one or two of his emissaries had seen somebody enter, whose description appeared to answer that of Langley. This, together with Langley's tenaciously claiming the performance of his promise to assist him, had determined Lord Orville, by some means, to prevent both his intrusion, or his importunity; and he had this very morning adopted steps which he thought would effectually prevent both. Until within these very few days, Mrs. Letsom averred that her lodger had no visiters; though within that period, she had been inquired for by several, and, among others, by an old gentleman, who seemed to know more of her, and "not much to her advantage," as Mrs. Letsom said, than even Mrs. Letsom herself.

From all this, Orville could not discover much: but he formed the greatest hopes of easy success from the circumstance of her poverty.—All, therefore, that he requested of Mrs. Letsom was, to contrive an opportunity for his seeing her alone, and securing him from any interruption. This was readily promised on the part of the obsequious landlady, who, informing Lord Orville that her "first floor" was going to Covent Garden, and that the whole house would be clear in about an hour, advised him to return at that time, when she would contrive that every body should be out of the way; and, to use a technical phrase, "no questions asked."

The douceur which Mrs. Letsom received for her compliance with Lord Orville's wishes made her eyes glisten with pleasure; and, as she obsequiously opened the door to her visiter, she simpered out something of "Mrs. Roberts being a very happy woman."

On returning to her parlor she found that the handkerchief, the scent of which had been so gratifying to her olfactory nerves, had been left behind. This, of course, became the immediate object of investigation; and the fineness of its texture, far beyond even her own extravagance in the frills of Mr. L's. best shirts, did not at all diminish her ideas of the consequence of her visiter. Mrs. Letsom's imagination, of course, soon appropriated this article to her own use, but in doing this the mark in the corner attracted her attention, and puzzled her not a little. It was an O. with what she called a flower-pot over it. Now, the meaning of this flower-pot was what she wished to find out; for, never having seen such a thing before, her curiosity was raised, and to gratify it, away she posted to a neighbor, who was fashionable laundress, and whose knowledge of heraldry, derived from the tails of shirts, the corners of pocket-handkerchiefs, and such other portions of the linen of the nobility as are blazoned with their honors, either in permanent ink, or marking stich, enabled her to pronounce the said flower-pot to be neither more nor less than a coronet; and that therefore, the handkerchief in question belonged to a lord—"to a ra-al lord." as Mrs. Letsom emphatically said.

This confirmation of her opinion that her visiter was somebody "particular," we may be sure did not diminish Mrs. Letsom's impressment in his service. It is astonishing how vice is diminished in our ideas, and what a lenient form it assumes, and how much less vicious and seducing terms we give it, when the perpetrator is a man of rank.

Mrs. Letsom, therefore, hurried home; only ejaculating, as she went along, "Well, what a lucky woman Mrs. Roberts is!—but some persons are born with silver spoons in their mouths—though what a lord can see in her pale face, I can't for the life of me imagine. However, that is nothing to me;

> 'People differ in taste, as in opinion;
> Some like an apple, some an *innion*.'"

And with this opposite and elégant quotation, the only one that Mrs. Lestom ever made in her

life, she prepared to send every body out of the way, that the lord might have his interview free from interruption.

CHAPTER XXVI.

CONTRE-TEMPS.

Paul Pry himself was scarcely a greater marplot than old Admiral Frankley, when he took any whim into his head upon the various affairs in which he thought it his privilege to interfere. As to Emily, Hartley, and Forrester, together with Lady Orville's family, he considered them all quite as amenable to him as though they were his own children, or he their guardian.

The union of Forrester with Emily had always been among his favorite projects; though he easily gave it up the moment he supposed an attachment to exist between that young lady and Lord Orville —to cross true love was in his idea a crime of no little magnitude. He had, however, always conceived such a very high opinion of Forrester's moral character and conduct, that he became quite incensed at learning, through the medium of Tadpole's communication, that he had been deceived; and he forthwith determined to sift the matter to the bottom, and expose the Joseph Surface who covered his libertinism with such a cloak of morality. With this view he applied to Tadpole, who, too happy to oblige an inmate of Orville House, and particularly one so distinguished by the Countess as the Admiral, soon told him where the lady in question lived, although he kept the secret of his having discovered it by the direction of Lord Orville; and, of course, concealed from his Lordship that he had given this information to the Admiral. Lord Orville himself had likewise greatly aggravated the Admiral's anger against Forrester; and had done every thing to impress him with the truth of the result of Tadpole's communication. The Admiral, therefore, determined to strike at the root of the evil, and to include the syren herself in his lecture; for, among his other oddities, he had great ideas of his own powers of conversion; and, in spite of his anger, from what he learned, as the result of his inquiries in the neighborhood, the lady in question was well worthy of their exertion. This became, in his opinion, still more necessary, from the circumstance of Forrester's persisting in not understanding him; and in denials of the truth of the Admiral's accusation.

To convict, therefore, from the lady's own lips, was become necessary to the Admiral's pertinacity. Yet with his notions of female decorum, it was some time before he could make up his mind to visit such a woman as he conceived this to be. What would his friends say if they discovered it? He should subject himself to the ridicule of the whole club; and perhaps furnish an anecdote for another Naval Sketch Book. He winced under these ideas, and the fears that they instilled into his mind; and it was some time before he resolved on the step, which he at length took on the very day that Lord Orville had made his acquaintance with Mrs. Letsom, and that she had agreed to assist him in obtaining an uninterrupted interview with her lodger. Her anxiety, however, to discover more particulars concerning her visiter, through the medium of the handkerchief, had, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, induced her to quit her post to consult the heraldric knowledge of her neighbor, the laundress. It was during this period of her absence that Mrs. Langley, who had for some days been too much annoyed by the growing familiarity and impertinence, both of her landlady and the servant, to ask any thing at their hands, had taken advantage of her infant's sleep, to go out into the immediate neighborhood to purchase some few necessaries; and just at the same time, the Admiral stole into the street, looking as sheepish and ashamed as though he was going to commit a larceny, and was afraid of detection. He did not know what sort of a character the house itself might bear, which was inhabited by a female of such habits; and was, therefore, naturally afraid to be seen knocking at the door. With this fear he passed it once or twice, and walked up and down the street with an assumed air of unconsciousness, purposely examining every house but the right one. At length, cautiously looking round, and ascertaining that there was no other passenger near, he seized the knocker, and gave a hurried and trembling rap at the door. The minute that must necessarily intervene between the time of this operation and the application being answered, seemed an age to the poor Admiral. He fidgetted about, looking first one side, and then the other, and stood at a little distance from the door, gazing at the Stilton cheeses in an adjoining shop, as though he was not waiting for its being opened. Under such circumstances to be obliged to knock a second time, and to kick one's heels during the pleasure of a lazy servant, is among the miseries of human life. The Admiral's eyes absolutely twinkled with impatience, while he mentally uttered some few of his usual oaths; and his second rap not having been answered on the instant, he was actually thinking of a retreat, when the door opened and released him. He slipped in with a celerity that put him out of sight of any passer-by in a moment; and asking if Mrs. Roberts was within, received the reply of the sulky girl—"Yes she's at home—second floor." Up went the Admiral; thinking within himself, the readiness with which the girl told him to mount to the lady' apartment, to be a confirmation of the character of the house, and its inhabitants. Arrived on the landing the Admiral felt rather awkward; and began to cogitate as to his mode of addressing the lady, and as to the lecture he should give her for seducing his young friend from his allegiance. His second gentle tap having remained unanswered, he ventured to open the door, and, seeing nobody, boldly entered the apartment. Here, heming very loudly, he trusted to bring the lady from one of the inner rooms, with which he supposed two doors he saw communicated. No person, however, appearing either on his repeated coughs, or on his tapping at the said two doors, he supposed the object of his visit to have gone out without the knowledge of the servant, and was thinking of retreating, when

the idea of the sensation he had experienced below, determined him rather to wait for the return of the lady, than have to run the ordeal of again standing in the street at the door of what he deemed a suspicious house.

He had now leisure to examine the apartment, which, so far from exhibiting those ill assorted luxuries which are generally found in the residences of women of the description the Admiral supposed the occupier to be, was distinguished by nothing but its extraordinary neatness; while some needle-work, still lying on the work-table, gave evidence of a kind of industry not at all in consonance with the ideas he had formed.

The only decoration which the apartment could boast was a picture in a superb frame over the chimney-piece. The gilding of this, which was much superior to any thing else in the room, was carefully papered up, while a green curtain helpped to preserve the picture itself from the dust, and showed either the particular value set on it by the owner, or designated it to be a subject not exactly calculated for general exposition. Considering the place he was in, this latter idea took possession of the Admiral's mind, and he blushed at the supposed depravity which sanctioned such profanation of the art. Curiosity was, however, raised, and removing the curtain, instead of the Venus he expected, he beheld the portrait of a female, apparently about fifty years of age, whose feature gave indication of great former beauty, and much recent sorrow or sickness. There was something in this portrait which rivetted the Admiral's attention; something that told him he had seen either the original, or the portrait, or something like it before. But when, or where, it was impossible for him to recollect. Still, however, the portrait seemed to inspire him with an interest, for which he tried in vain to account; and he amused himself during the tedious interval of waiting, by endeavoring to bring to his remembrance some reason to which he might ascribe his interest in this picture. Beneath it, hung a small sketch of a boy, in a midshipman's jacket, with the shirt collar open; but this he only glanced at for a minute, as wearing the uniform of his own profession. It was the picture of the female that attracted his attention, and roused his curiosity.

In the mean time, Mrs. Letsom, having derived fresh energy in the cause of Lord Orville, since the discovery that what she had thought to be a flower pot on the handkerchief, was in reality a coronet, began to perform her promise of preparing to secure him an uninterrupted interview with her lodger, For this purpose she despatched her maid to some distance, in such a hurry, that the girl either had not time, or forgot to tell her mistress of the visit of the Admiral. The moment the girl was gone, Mrs. Letsom also ascertained that her "First Floor" had departed; for she always distinguished her lodgers by the floor they occupied; and to have heard her say, that her "Parlors" were gone to the play; the "First Floor" to Vauxhall, and her "Second Floor" gone out to drink tea; one might have imagined good Mrs. Letsom's house to have been literally turned out of the window. The coast being thus clear, she half mounted the second flight of stairs, and hearing the Admiral moving about, she imagined Mrs Langley, as usual, at home with he infant, and accordingly betook herself to the parlor to await the arrival of her titled visiter; for such she now no longer doubted him to be.

Lord Orville had been too long frustrated in his attempt to see his fair incognita, and was too impatient for the promised opportunity, not to be punctual, and precisely at the hour that Mrs. Letsom had designated as that at which her "First Floor" was sure to have departed, he entered the street. It so happened, that Langley, moody and low-spirited, had resolved to give up his dinner-party, and return home to spend the evening with his wife; and entering the street at the same moment, he literally ran against Lord Orville, close to the door of his own lodgings.

The surprise at this rencounter was mutual, and extorted an exclamation from each of them. In Lord Orville's mind, it confirmed his suspicions of Langley's connexion with the lady, and thus a considerable quantity of anger was mingled with his wish to get rid him. On Langley's part, the only sensation he experienced was the fear of his humble lodging being discovered, and he considered himself exceedingly lucky in not having knocked at his door before he saw Lord Orville, and was almost afraid that his very consciousness would betray him. He seemed to think second floor was written in his face; and was casting about in his mind to discover some excuse for being in the street when Lord Orville, who was never at a loss, exclaimed,

"My dear Langley! how fortunate: I have literally hunted you to-day; I looked in at the club twice, hoping to find you. I have seen his Grace of ——, who desired to see you before five in Downing-street. I see it wants but ten minutes of that hour, so you had better make the best of your way; should you be too late, go directly to the club, and wait there for me; I will come and take you to his private house."

Langley's countenance brightened at this intelligence, and as Orville familiarly took his arm and hurried him out of the street, he was profuse in his expressions of gratitude. In the next street, Lord Orville said, "But you will walk faster without me, and may perhaps still be in time; should you be too late, don't move from the club till I come."

Away went Langley in the direction of Downing-street, while Lord Orville, by a circuitous route, again attained the door of No. 3, which was speedily opened by the obsequious Mrs. Letsom; who, courtseying to the ground, whispered that all was safe, and preceded him to the first floor landing; when Orville, impatiently passing her, said aloud, "Well, well, I'll find my way, don't trouble yourself," proceeded to the second story.

The Admiral, who was still engaged in contemplating the portrait, having heard the knock at the door, and the steps ascending the stairs, had naturally enough imagined the lady to be coming, he therefore prepared accordingly; but nothing could exceed his consternation when Lord Orville's voice struck upon his ear. All the power of that young nobleman's ridicule at once occurred to his imagination, and all the horrors of the discovery he had dreaded, stared him in the face with tenfold horrors. There being but one egress and entrance into the apartment, no opportunity of escape from

the threatened danger presented itself; concealment was the only resource, and imagining that Lord Orville would immediately retire on finding the lady absent, he hastily opened one of the inner doors, and as hastily shutting, locking, and bolting it, found himself concealed, to his increased consternation, in the lady's bed-room.

The first question that naturally occurred to the Admiral's mind was, what could bring Lord Orville there: and this, in the simplicity of his heart, was answered, by the supposition that he was actuated by the same motives as himself; and he internally lauded Orville for so meritorious an intention.

On discovering the apartment to be vacant, Orville, like the Admiral, had made an application to each of the inner doors, and not at all adding to the old gentleman's tranquillity by so doing. Receiving no reply, he began to apprehend that the object of his pursuit must be in some other part of the house, and descended in search of the landlady to ascertain the fact. Mrs. Letsom, however, though very willing to oblige such a generous visiter, and to give him every facility in her power, had still an eye to her own safety; and not being at all certain in her own mind how Lord Orville might be received by her lodger, she determined to keep out of the way, so that if any scene of violence should occur, she might at any rate plead ignorance, and have the excuse of absence. The moment, therefore, that she had ushered Lord Orville to the second floor, she had quitted the house, leaving him as she imagined, "a clear stage and fair play;" and thus, she expressed it, "kept her own neck out of the noose, happen what would."

When Lord Orville found himself, as he imagined, quite alone in the house, he was at first rather puzzled as to his proceedings; but certain of Mrs. Letsom, he determined to return to the apartment up stairs, and wait the event.

His return was no pleasure to the Admiral, who heard him impatiently pacing up and down the room, with no very enviable feelings. During the short absence of Lord Orville, the Admiral had found that he was not the sole occupant of the bedroom; for, concealed by the curtains, he had discovered a chubby boy sleeping in all the soundness of infant innocence. This added not a little to his perplexity, as should the little urchin awake, it was but natural that he should cry at the sight of a stranger, and the Admiral began to think how he should quiet him should such an event happen.

Two or three times Lord Orville tried the lock of the door which led to the room in which the Admiral had taken refuge, to ascertain if it was really fastened. During these attempts the old gentleman's perturbation increased tenfold, and despairing at length of the departure of the intruder, he began to curse the inadvertence which had got him into a dilemma, from which he saw no chance of escaping without disagreeable consequences.

At length the street door was heard to open and shut; and it was evident that somebody had let themselves in: footsteps were presently heard ascending the stairs, and Mrs. Langley entered the apartment, having admitted herself into the house by the Bramah key which every lodger possessed.

Lord Orville had placed himself in such a position that she had closed the door and entered the apartment without perceiving him, until she was too far advanced to retreat, as she certainly would have done, had she seen him in the first instance.

On discovering him, she uttered a half shriek of mingled surprise and fear, and would have again attained the door, had not Lord Orville respectfully placed himself so that she could not gain it without passing him.

"Pardon my intrusion;" Lord Orville was commencing, when Mrs. Langley interrupted him with the question of "How he had gained admittance to her appartment?" in a voice rendered nearly inarticulate from agitation. She had recognised her persecutor, and, in addition to her fears of being alone with him, now added the dread of the consequences that might ensue should her husband return.

"You cannot be ignorant that your own attractions have induced my endeavours to obtain an interview, and my perseverance has at length crowned them with success. You must have been long aware how ardently this interview has been desired by me; and though you have had the cruelty to deny me a voluntary meeting. I trust you will give me credit for the exertions which have thus procured me a pleasure I have so long solicited in vain."

"I am aware, sir," replied Mrs. Langley, "of having been at various times insulted by your addresses, and you cannot be ignorant of the manner in which they have been repulsed. Your intrusion here, sir, bespeaks a conduct which I am loath to characterise by the name it deserves."

"Nay, nay; this is being too severe. In the street, exposed to the public gaze—I could account for the coyness which repulsed me—but here, you may listen to me in safety."

"I will listen to nothing, sir," interrupted Mrs. Langley; "these are my apartments, and I desire the free occupation of them."

"It was my knowledge that they were yours that has caused my intrusion into them. That they are unworthy of you, will be your own fault in future, if——"

Mrs. Langley again interrupted him, and assuming all the courage and calmness she could command, she said, "Sir, if I have hitherto confined my attempts at extricating myself from undeserved insult to request that you quit my apartments, it is because I am anxious to avoid any exposition that may be misinterpreted; I—"

"Nay, hear me, at any rate. Excuse me for saying, that indeed you must hear me. I find you here in poor apartments, quite unworthy of you. I know, from my inquiries, the situation in which you are placed, and I come to offer you to ameliorate it; nay, to make it splendid in comparison with what it is now."

"What have I done, sir, to draw down this insult on me?" asked Mrs. Langley. "If any information you have received as to my situation can have induced it, your information has been false; and I know not what right you had to make either my name or circumstances the subject of inquiry."

"Will not my love, my admiration, plead my excuse—"

"Hold, sir! insult me not by expressions, which, as a wife, it is criminal for me to permit; and

which, were it otherwise, would be as useless as they are displeasing to me."

"Wife!" exclaimed Orville, in a tone of doubt.

"Yes, sir, and as such I entreat you, if you be a gentleman, to quit these apartments, and avoid the chances of an encounter with my husband."

"Husband!" again repeated Orville, in the same tone: "If you are a wife, you are at least a neglected one—"

"*If* I am!" exclaimed Mrs. Langley, with indignation: "That I *am* a wife, let my indignation convince you is true. That I am a neglected one, let the ardent affection I bear a deserving husband, convince you is false. But even were it otherwise, I trust I should find as strong a cause for my present indignation in female virtue alone, as I now find while that is united with my husband's love, and my contempt for you."

During this conversation, every word of which had been overheard by the Admiral, his eyes had been gradually opening to the deception which Lord Orville had practised upon him with regard to Forrester, and, trembling with indignation, he could scarcely restrain himself from bursting into the room, and exposing suth base hypocrisy as it deserved. With this feeling he almost forgot the awkward predicament in which he himself was placed; but on the mention of the husband, he began to feel that he had quite as much to dread from his indignation at appearances, as Orville had for his insulting intrusion. There was, however, no other remedy than to remain quietly until Lord Orville should retreat, which he had no doubt would soon be the case, from the reception he had met with, and then make the best apology that he could for his own situation.

Lord Orville, however, with all his knowledge of the world, and misled, perhaps, by the reports that he had heard, wanted the tact to discriminate between the really virtuous indignation of the woman he was addressing, and that assumed anger which so many of the sex exhibit under similar circumstances. He thefore, most pertinaciously continued his addresses, until Mrs. Langley insisted on his quitting the room instantly, or at all personal risk she threatened to raise the house.

Lord Orville, whose passions had become the more inflamed by her opposition, and whose admiration of her beauty had been greatly increased during this interview, felt the futility of her threat, and telling her that any application to the bell would be useless, from his having contrived to get every body out of the way, seemed determined to make the most of the opportunity that Mrs. Letsom had afforded him. Recollecting the fortunate result of his perseverance upon former occasions, and still miscalculating the character he had to deal with, he approached Mrs. Langley.—Alarmed at her defenceless situation, she entreated him by everything that was honorable—by everything that was dear to him, to quit her: Lord Orville, however, seemed determined to persist, for there is none so unfeeling and merciless as the sensualist when his passions are inflamed. Perceiving his determination, she uttered a scream and exclaimed, "Oh, my husband! where are you in this moment of my peril! have I none to rescue me?" At these words the door of the bed-room was violently thrown open, and the Admiral, rushing forward, stood between her and her insulter, with his amber-headed cane raised over the head of the latter.

"Yes; you have *me!*" roared out the Admiral; "and in such a cause, the vigor of youth will again nerve my arm with a sufficient strength to break any scoundrel's head that dares lay a finger on a defenceless woman."

Lord Orville and Mrs. Langley were equally astonished at the apparition of the Admiral; but the latter uttered an ejaculation of thanks at his appearance, and instinctively clung to him for protection.

Orville in a moment saw all his mother's schemes overturned, and the impossibility of averting the consequences of the discovery. Never, however, at a loss, he very soon recovered his sang froid; and, determining to brazen it out, either affected, or gave way to, a natural burst of laughter.

"Fairly hunted out, I declare," exclaimed he; and then, turning with a satirical air to Mrs. Langley, who, in spite of her evident surprise, he supposed to have had a knowledge of the Admiral's concealment, which was in his mind a confirmation of the truth of his suppositions with regard to her, he said, "What, ma'am! this is another husband; perhaps you have one for every chamber. Upon my word, Admiral, I owe you an apology; and had you but given me a hint of your presence, I should have made my retreat before."

"Insulting man!" exclaimed Mrs. Langley.

"D—n it, my Lord, don't put me in a passion; are you not ashamed to use rank and riches to insult virtuous poverty? Nay, nay, don't tremble so—he shan't hurt you now. After all it seems as though we had fought and bled in the service of our country, only to permit these scapegraces to pursue their career of vice in peace and quietness."

"Poor," replied Lord Orville, "because she would not listen to me.—Virtuous," pursued he, with a sneer, "because you were in that chamber. Madam, I take my leave, and shall call at some more convenient season to make my apologies, when so near neighbor may render it more convenient to reply as I wish. I beg your pardon, Admiral, for interrupting your amour: at your age it is unfair—but, rest assured, in my detail of this adventure, I shall not forget the prominent part played by the correct Admiral Frankley;" and so saying, with one of his most elegant bows, he quitted the apartment."

The whole of this was said with such an air of bravadoing nonchalance, and with so much self-possession, that Lord Orville was half down stairs, humming "*batti, batti!*" before the Admiral recovered himself sufficiently to exclaim:

"What a d—d impudent fellow! I beg your pardon for swearing," said the Admiral; the first part in a passion, the last mechanically, as though he was speaking to Lady Orville.

"Admiral Frankley!" exclaimed Mrs. Langley, almost breathless with surprise, and in a voice which seemed to doubt her sense of hearing, "did I hear right?"

"I dare say you did—though dam me, if I think I did. What did the gentlemanly rascal say?"

"He called you Admiral Frankley, sir."

"Well; is lying so common that it becomes extraordinary when a man is called by his own name?"

Mrs. Langley almost sank to the ground with the agitation which this confirmation of her having heard aright, occasioned. Leaning on the back of a chair for support, she gazed for a moment at the Admiral, and, bursting into tears, seemed ready to faint.

"Eh, what—why what's the matter? D—n it, don't faint ma'am—I don't understand it—here, Mrs. Landlady! Oh, curse these women, what the devil shall I do?" And, for want of any thing better, he began to fan Mrs. Langley with the broad-brimmed low-crowned hat which always formed a part of his costume, in spite of all Lady Orville's efforts to humanize him, with one hand, while he slapped her back with no very great degree of gentleness with the other.

"Oh, sir," said Mrs. Langley, sinking on her knees, in spite of all his efforts to prevent her; "Oh, sir,—don't you know me?"

"Know you! how should I!—Pray, pray get up."

"Does not your heart tell you who I am?"

"No!—how the devil should it?—For God's sake get up—here's a cursed scrape!" And the Admiral really for a moment began to think himself the victim of some plan; when Mrs. Langley pointed to the picture, nearly unable to speak.

"Well the picture; I see it."

"That, sir, was my mother—"

"Well, I've no doubt it was;" and he was edging towards the door.

"And *your sister*—"

"Eh!" exclaimed the Admiral, almost jumping with surprise, and his retrogade movement arrested in a moment. "My sister! what, Fanny!" and, gazing intently on the picture, his stern features relaxed, and a tear started into his eye, as the gradual recognition of one who had once been so dear to him, stole over his mind. "And so it is!—and you are—" turning to Mrs. Langley.

"Her only child; your niece. You will not throw me from you?"

"Throw you from me! Never. Come to my arms; for I've a choking something in my throat that is going to make a fool of me," stammered out the Admiral; and, in a moment, the uncle and niece were locked in a close embrace. "And the chubby-faced boy in the next room?" sobbed out the Admiral—

"Is mine."

"And mine—" repeated the Admiral.

At this moment Lady Orville's insinuations occurred to his memory; and connecting themselves with the scene which had just passed, and the sentiments which had actuated his visit to Mrs. Letsom's, began to rouse suspicions of his niece's correctness, which caused the heart of the Admiral to sink within him. Gently, therefore, putting Mrs. Langley away from him, he began to hem, and to cast about in his mind how he should satisfy himself. His niece looked at him uneasily and inquiringly.

"Well, but Fanny—is your name Fanny? your mother's was—I have heard strange tales. The father of your boy, where is he? your—"

"Oh, sir, if you have heard any thing against my husband, he has been belied. It was he who soothed my parents' last moments, and who made them easy by promising me his protection. There is not a more affectionate heart, or a more generous soul in the world; though misfortunes may——"

"D——n his misfortunes. If he is a gentleman and a man of honor——"

"That, indeed, he is both," said Mrs. Langley, with energy; "and the gentlest and kindest of human beings."

"Then forgive me my suspicions, and come again to my arms," exclaimed the Admiral, while joy lighted up his rugged features; and he was in the act of again embracing his niece, when he found himself roughly seized by the shoulder, and compelled by a violent push to make various evolutions, not remarkable for their elegance, till his involuntary spin was stopped by the corner of the room; and as his eyes began to resume their power of sight, after the giddiness which the sudden whirl had occasioned, he beheld Langley standing in a threatening attitude between him and his niece.

After Langley had quitted Orville, some circumstances had occurred that had increased his feelings of jealousy with regard to his wife; and these adding bitterness to his disappointment, he determined to return home and seek some explanation. The Admiral's and Mrs. Langley's agitation had been too great for them to hear the street door open. Thus Langley had burst in upon them unawares, and had acted upon the first impulse of the moment, when he saw a stranger, as he thought, in such close contact with his wife.

"Why, Langley! what the devil? the 'gentlest of human beings,' indeed!"

"Admiral Frankley!" exclaimed Langley; though without any diminution of his indignation—"I am surprised that a man of your age—"

"Should spin so like a humming-top," interrupted the Admiral. "And so am I, cursedly surprised."

"How dare you, sir, intrude into my apartments?"

"Oh, my dearest Langley, this is my uncle," said Mrs. Langley.

"Your uncle?"

"Yes; whose name you would never even let me mention to you."

"My dearest Langley! why, where is Mr. Roberts, then?" inquired the Admiral, now quite bewildered.

Satisfactory explanations were now given, and the Admiral was rejoiced beyond measure that his niece should have chosen one for her husband whom he had been so much inclined to love as Langley.

The grand-nephew was now introduced; and by his smiles seemed to participate in the joy of his parents.

It was determined that none should yet be made acquainted with the discovery that had taken place. The Admiral, as usual, had a plan of his own, which had just suggested itself to his mind, and he was determined to put it in execution. He, therefore, quickly took his leave of Mrs. Langley and the child with a kiss, and of Langley with a hearty shake of the hand; leaving them both happier

than they had been since their marriage, while he went to prepare them a more suitable residence.

CHAPTER XXVII.

PARENTAL FEARS.

Both Lady Emily's and Hartley's parental fears had been excited, not only by the hints which they received from various correspondents, but also by the changed style of Emily's own letters, and by the very little communication that their son kept up with the Grove. Forrester's manner, too, since his return, had been far from satisfactory, and his total silence, unloss very closely questioned, on the subject of either Emily or her brother, had tended greatly to augment Lady Emily's anxiety; and this had determined Lady Emily and Hartley to go immediately to town: both mentally blaming themselves for having resigned so sacred a charge as that of a daughter, even for a season, to any other hands than their own. Mr. Hartley, too, had received a private letter from Lady Orville, in which that Lady hoped to forward her schemes by detailing her suspicions of young Hartley's liaison with one whom she designated as "some worthless being." The history of his intrigue with Caroline Dormer she had learned from Lord Orville; and attributing the little influence of Lady Sophia's charms to the ascendency of this passion, she thought she might break it off, and make character at the same time, by putting Mr. Hartley on his guard.

In the mean time, the Admiral had escaped Lord Orville's bantering by presenting Mrs. Langley to the Countess as his niece, and the wife of one of her friends; and by this act, and the active measures he instantly adopted to establish them sufficiently proclaimed his intentions with regard to their future welfare.

The Countess, in despite of the vexation of her heart, received Mrs. Langley with apparent kindness, and congratulated Langley on the revival of his fortunes, while in secret she bitterly reproached her son with the imprudence which had led to such a discovery.

Orville himself, with all his effrontery, was overcome with confusion by such an unexpected result; while Emily shuddered at the precipice upon which she had stood; and, the delusion once removed, she was astonished as well as ashamed at the weakness by which she had been misled, and the ease with which she had been deceived.

The moment the first discovery of Lord Orville's falsehood was made, mask after mask dropped off; all the actions of the Orville family stood before her mental perception in their true light, and she hailed the arrival of her mother as that of her guardian angel; and throwing herself in her arms, burst into tears, and entreated never again to quit her protecting superintendence. As to Forrester, she did not dare to ask after him. Lady Emily saw in her daughter's agitation that some great revolution had taken place in her feelings, but kindly forbearing any inquiries, only soothed her, and could only hope that her protecting influence had not been withdrawn long enough to produce any lasting evil.

With Lady Orville, the kindness of Lady Emily's nature rendered it impossible for her to find any fault; and, withdrawing her daughter from her protection, imagined her much more to be pitied than blamed; so artfully had the Countess woven her own story of all the events which had taken place, and so successfully had she exerted all those blandishments of which she was such a perfect mistress.

By these means, Lady Orville imagined she still held a thread that would yet in time tend at any rate to the union of Hartley and Lady Sophia; although the expose of Lord Orville's affair with Mrs. Langley, had, she perceived, forever precluded all hope of his marriage with Emily.

Although the anxiety of Mr. and Lady Emily Hartley was in a great measure allayed by again having their daughter under their own protection; that which they experienced for their son had considerably increased by finding him the victim of a nervous fever, accompanied by delirium and other alarming symptoms. Nor was this anxiety at all relieved by the information derived from his medical attendants, that it was more a disease of the mind than the body. He had been what his servant called "ailing for some time," and from the best tempered and easiest master in the world, had latterly become irritable and captious. Beyond this the faithful attendant disclosed nothing; for although he was perfectly aware of what he called his master's "love affair," he naturally enough concluded that could be nothing to the old gentleman, or to Lady Emily.

The fact was, that Hartley could not be an unfeeling seducer. That which Orville and his companions would have triumphed in, and laughed at, preyed upon his heart with ceaseless remorse. The very beauty which had been his apology became now his reproach, and the more he saw of the innocence and rectitude of Caroline's mind, the more bitter became his pain at the thought that for him alone had she sinned. In spite, too, of her assumed spirits, and her attempts to amuse him by her music and conversation, he could perceive the increasing paleness and thinness of her cheek. He could discover the traces of tears in her eyes, and all those symptoms of secret unhappiness, every one of which was a bitter though silent reproach to himself. He saw that the happiness of her youth was blighted in the bud; and that the very pleasure which she derived in his society (the only pleasure left to her in life) was imbittered by her remorse. And she bore all this so meekly, so resignedly, that it had more effect upon his heart than if she had given way to open tears and reproaches.

Then, too, the recollection of her father; of his confidence in and kindness to him; and the old attachment that had existed between Mr. Dormer and his own father; all added bitterness to his feelings.

There was but one way that he could remedy the evil done to Caroline, and that was by marrying her: and to this, in spite of his arguments, he felt a repugnance for which he himself could scarcely account. Her beauty he acknowledged; he was

satisfied with the rectitude of her mind and principles, in spite of her weakness with regard to himself; her accomplishments and education were really such as would never have disgraced any situation; he knew that although no express verbal promise of marriage had ever been given, yet he was aware that every action, and every conversation, had tended to impress her mind with the conviction that it was his intention to marry her, and he was sensible that this was due to her as an act of justice.

Yet how could he introduce her to his family as his wife, who had been his mistress? how could he himself endure this reflection? So unjust is man under circumstances of this nature, that he permits his own act to influence his decisions against his victim; and is the first to preclude, by his own sentiments, the only path by which a virtuous woman may again enter society, without reflecting that it has been himself alone that has rendered her thus unfit to bear the title of his wife.

Independently, however, of all this, Hartley began to find that his own affection was not of such a lasting nature as he at first imagined it to be; it had never been founded upon that basis which is the only security for the continuance of an attachment. Caroline had been the first woman for whom he had ever experienced anything resembling love, and he was too young to perceive that he was more attracted by her beauty than by those mental qualities which he was delighted to acknowledge, and which he was willing to believe had more to do with his attachment than they really had. Deceived himself by his passion, he had the more easily deceived Caroline into a belief of the permanency of his feelings; but had he ever reflected upon the ease with which a few months of dissipation had driven her from his memory, he would have been sensible that this was not one of those passions that give a color to a man's existence.

Caroline herself could scarcely have been more unhappy at this discovery or the true state of his feelings, had she known it, than Hartley himself. It made his seduction of her appear a thousand times more heartless in his eyes, than it had ever done before, and robbed her of that for which she had sacrificed so much.

Every interview, however, convinced him of the truth of his surmises, as well as carried firmer conviction of the real excellence of her he had thus wantonly sacrificed to a delusive and temporary passion; while every day and hour also convinced him of the sincerity of her love for him.

The chance she had, too, of soon becoming a mother, did not allay his anxieties either for her or for himself.

All these circumstances preyed upon the mind of Hartley, and rendered him careless and unmindful of every thing else. His former associates were deserted; he went to no parties; he passed his whole time either in bitter reflections in the solitude of his chamber; in attempts to shake off their effects by violent exercise; or in the society of Caroline, the pleasure of which was embittered by her increasing illness and his own remorse.

It was these contending emotions that had so preyed upon Hartley's mind, that they at length affected his constitution, and produced the fever, to the influence of which he had at length been compelled to succumb on the very day that Mr. Hartley and Lady Emily arrived in town.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A MISTRESS.

We all know the public penalties attached to the title which is placed at the head of this chapter. Every body is aware of that exclusion from respectable female society which it entails, and of that contempt in which all who bear it are held by those whose good fortune or good principles have preserved them from the same kind of obloquy. But few, perhaps, are aware of the bitterness of those feelings, and of those heart-burnings which its unfortunate possessor endures in private; few know the scalding tears of shame, the deep sighs of repentance, that are shed and uttered in secret, or are sensible of that shrinking, even from themselves, which characterizes the hours of their solitude. These are far bitterer punishments to a sensitive mind, than all the unfeeling taunts of an unpitying world. These are penalties which the lapse from virtue entails upon the transgression of a far severer nature than any of those public ones which merely excludes them from society; since these exclude them from the society of their own thoughts, or render these thoughts such bitter accusers that they are happy to fly wherever they can find a relief from them. Oppressed by reflections such as these, and musing over those days of her innocence and happiness gone never to return, Caroline Dormer sat at the casement of one of those pretty little cottages with which the outskirts of the metropolis abound, and which, by commanding rather an extensive view of the road, gave her the earliest sight of Hartley as he either rode or drove to the pleasant and comfortable domicile which he had provided for her.

From the period of that excursion which had been so fatal to the future prospects of Caroline, she no longer thought it necessary to make Fanny Thompson the perpetual accompaniment of her interviews with her lover. But although she had not sufficient resolution to resist the influences of her love, and the importunities of Hartley, she drooped under the struggle between her principles and her passion. Her occupation became not only tasteless but disgusting to her, and she shrank from the glances of her companions as though her secret were written on her forehead; and shuddered at their merriment as though their jocund laugh was raised in derision of herself.

With these feelings and sentiments it was no wonder that she at length yielded to Hartley's entreaties, and consented to leave a situation become so irksome to her, for the purpose of living under his protection, until some future period should be more propitious to their mutual wishes. Thus ambiguously did Hartley still picture those future intentions which were yet unknown to himself.

For this purpose Hartley took a little cottage in the suburbs, situated in the midst of a neat though small garden, and tastefully fitted it up with every thing that he thought could contribute to her comfort and convenience. Caroline valued this only as an instance of his affection; every thing else was indifferent to her; while her utmost exertions were used to make the house as pleasant as possible to Hartley, when circumstances permitted him to make it his home. He would have had a regular establishment, and had actually purchased a plain carriage with a pair of grays for her use; but these she peremptorily declined. She would have shrunk with horror, at thus blazoning her situation to the world, and at the appearance of enjoying luxuries as the reward of her transgression.

Her own wants were few, and to these she contracted her personal expenses; and persuaded Hartley to permit her to confine her household to two female servants, who with her assistance and taste kept the cottage in a style that never led him to regret the superior splendor of those establishments which he quitted for its enjoyment. Caroline had but one pleasure left her in the world, and this was the society of her lover. During his visits, which were now daily, since he made the cottage more his home than any other place, she struggled to appear cheerful, and though Hartley could not but perceive the increasing paleness of her cheek, and the perceptible decline of her health, she never murmured a complaint, but still smiled sweetly and affectionately, still betrayed a heart and soul entirely devoted to himself; and still exerted herself to entertain him with her music and her conversation.

Sometimes he thought that the perfect solitude in which she lived must injure her health, but no persuasion could induce her to quit her retreat; no entreaty induce her to partake of any amusement. From the moment she had been his she had avoided being seen with him in any public place, and had confined herself entirely to her own house.

Small as it was, she thought the little domain quite wide enough for her shame, which she would have shrunk from exhibiting beyond its limited precincts.

But though Caroline thus contrived to be tolerably cheerful in his presence, Hartley was little aware of the manner in which her time was spent during his absence. He knew not of the hours spent in bitter tears, and still bitterer reflections; the sleepless nights of agonizing repentance, or of the mornings to which the bright sun gave no cheerfulness for her. She generally sat at the window of the small drawing-room before-mentioned, because there she could see the last of him on his departure, and obtain the earliest intimation of his return. Here she continued to pass the weary hours of his absence in preparations for that event which, under other circumstances, would have conferred happiness; but which in her present situation only produced tears of still bitterer repentance at the prospect of giving life to a being whose birth must be stigmatized by the disgrace and transgression of its parents.

So painfully conscious was she of the position in which she was placed that she never rang the bell for the servants that she did not blush and almost tremble at their presence, while she uttered every request with the fear that some mark of their disrespect might be shown in their answers or their conduct.

Poor Caroline! how much more would she have suffered had she been aware of the change that was gradually, and in spite of himself, working in the mind of her lover; in whose heart we have seen that passion was rapidly subsiding into a mingled sentiment of friendship, pity, and esteem. It is true that as his passion subsided, his sense of the injustice he had done Caroline became stronger, and Hartley was a man quite as capable of remedying the wrong he had done, from a sense of justice, as from a continuance of his love. He saw, however, the certain misery he should entail upon himself in a wife who no longer inspired the warmest feelings of his heart; and for whom he felt merely pity and esteem. He knew also the blow such a marriage would give to his parents, and dreaded their unhappiness more perhaps than their anger. We have seen that this struggle in his mind had produced a fever, under the effects of which Hartley was laboring at the arrival of his family in town.

This illness had, for the first time, kept Hartley from the cottage of Caroline, and it was the second day of his absence, that she was anxiously watching at the window for the usual hour of his return.

A hurried note of the evening before had apprized her of what he called a mere temporary indisposition, but gave no intimation of the possibility of its continuance. The whole of the present morning had passed over without any farther communication, and she of course expected him at the time he usually visited her.

That hour had, however, long since passed, and her anxiety was increasing to such a degree that she had half formed the determination of going to town to ascertain the extent of his illness, when a carriage appeared approaching the cottage.

At the first sight of a close carriage, she had scarcely an idea that it could be Hartley; but as it came nearer she recognised his livery, and merely supposing that he was not well enough to ride or drive as usual, her heart beat with pleasure at his return. Her eye glanced rapidly round the apartment, to see that every thing was arranged as he generally liked it; and she rang the bell that the carriage might not be kept waiting a moment at the gates. She did not dare follow her inclinations, and rush to the hall to receive him, because she was too much ashamed of her feelings to venture the exhibition of them before her servants.

So overjoyed was she at his return, which was becoming almost unexpected, that she did not observe the absence of his usual greeting when he first came in sight of the window at which he knew she always watched for his coming.

Another minute elapsed, steps were heard ascending the stairs, The smile of welcome was spreading its cheerful influence over her countenance, and lighting up her sad features with pleasure, when the door was opened by the maid-servant, and instead of her lover she beheld a stern-looking gentleman of fifty, who seemed to regard her with any thing but a look of kindness.

As the door had opened, she had started towards it to hasten the desired meeting, even by the thousandth part of a second; a period indefinable and unfelt in the common circumstances of life, but which is an hour in the "Calendar of Love;" stopping, however, in the midst of her career, she stood in an attitude of mingled terror and surprise at the appearance of a stranger. The first thought that crossed her mind, which in her excited state generally jumps at once to the worst conclusions, was that her lover was dead: and she breathed the name of "Hartley" in a tone of imploring interrogatory that expressed the intenseness of her anxiety.

"My name is Hartley, madam," said the stranger, "and I am the father of the misguided young man whom you expected."

Caroline looked for a moment in his countenance, in the stern features of which she could trace some faint resemblance to the more youthful lineaments of her lover; then hiding her blushing face with her hands, she sunk overpowered with shame on the nearest seat, and, sobbing convulsively, Mr. Hartley perceived the tears forcing themselves through her fingers.

Misled by Lady Orville's misrepresentations, Mr. Hartley had come in search of Caroline avowedly to reproach her with the seduction of his son, and to break off the connexion for ever.

When, however, he saw her extreme youth, and the unaffected shame and distress pictured in her countenance and manner, he perceived at once that Lady Orville had been mistaken, and began to apprehend his son more in fault than he had been led to suppose. One so young, and apparently so devoted and artless, could never have been the seducer; and the father's heart felt a pang at being compelled to force his son to an act of injustice, out of mere justice to his family.

In spite of all her attempts to restrain them, Caroline's sobs were at first so convulsive that Mr. Hartley was compelled to soothe where he had intended to reproach; but as she became more calm, and the first ebullition of her feelings began to subside, he resumed his tone of sternness, as though he was fearful of giving her the hope which he came to destroy; for he now clearly perceived she was no hackneyed follower in the paths of vice, and that she was most probably the misled instead of the misleader; the betrayed instead of the betrayer.

But Mr. Hartley took a very different course to the one he had at first intended. He represented the situation in which he found her, and enlarged on the present and future disgrace of such a connexion. To this exordium she could only answer by her sobs and blushes, till, roused by something that struck her ear with its severity, she exclaimed in agony:—

"Oh, true! true! but who reduced me to this? who but the son of him who is reproaching me?"

Mr. Hartley was silent for a moment, and then pursued, "Think not, madam, my son shall escape———"

These words roused pain of another sort in the mind of Caroline, and she interrupted him by exclaiming, "Oh, reproach not him, the fault was mine, the crime was mine, I ought to have withdrawn myself, I ought not to have encouraged——" and here her tears interrupted what she meant to be a defence of her lover. Hartley's feelings were affected, but summoning his resolution he again presented the injury which the continuance of such a connexion must be to both of them, and those prospects of his son which it must inevitably blight.

Caroline looked forward to her own blighted prospects, but saying nothing of them, nor even alluding to the still greater injury which she had sustained, and must sustain, throughout the future years of her existence, she summoned all her courage to her aid, and, with as firm a voice as she could command, "Think not, sir, that any thing shall arise from a degraded being like myself that shall ever stand in the way of your son's welfare and prospects. I thank you for painting my situation in its true light; I will not deny that I have felt this before, but you, sir, have made me feel it more keenly; you have torn away the veil of delusion which has till this moment hung over my senses, and which has hitherto enabled me to find an apology for vice and degradation in the excess of my affection, and I thank you for it. A life of repentance shall, in some measure, atone for my past errors. And rest assured, sir, the peace of Mr. Hartley or his family shall never be endangered in future by the degraded and unhappy Caroline Dormer."

"Dormer!" exclaimed Mr. Hartley, "Good God, the name of my old friend and tutor—Who are you?"

"His child—his only child," sobbed out Caroline, as she again sunk almost fainting on the sofa, and gave way to all the grief which this mention of her father had occasioned.

Mr. Hartley was staggered, the daughter of his earliest and most respected friend, from whom he himself had derived his first principles of morality, seduced and ruined by his son. He walked up and down the room in a state of great agitation. Pity—justice—were beginning to prevail, when the worldly father stopped their progress in his heart; and engendered the idea of compromising between his sense of what was right and just and his family pride.

"Miss Dormer," said he, kindly, and he took her hand, "Miss Dormer, forgive me; pardon any harshness of which I may have been guilty, and believe me that it arose from being misled as to the circumstances——"

"Oh, sir, treat me not thus," said Caroline, interrupting him, "I can bear your reproaches, but I cannot—cannot bear your kindness. Go, sir, to your son, make your mind easy, I will never see him more; enough unhappiness has already, I perceive, been caused by me; let it in future be confined to her whose conduct has deserved it."

"No," replied Mr. Hartley, "we part not thus; the unexpected occurrences of this interview have made it necessary that we should meet again, The welfare of my son, the happiness of his mother, the ——" and he would have said "the respectability of his family," but the ill-timed sentence closed ere it was uttered, and he finished by saying, "every thing, both for your sake and his, requires that you should not see each other again. Keep firm in this virtuous resolution, and all the protection that Lady Emily and myself can afford shall

be yours, and every thing on our part done to redeem the past, and to restore tranquillity and happiness to the future."

The word "happiness" was repeated by Caroline mechanically; but she repulsed the desire she had to say that it had fled from her for ever.

Her resolution was already fixed, and this gave her a greater air of coolness than she really possessed, and enabled her to take leave of Mr. Hartley with a tranquillity she did not feel.

CHAPTER XXIX.

SEPARATION.

On Mr. Hartley's return he found his son somewhat better, and by this time his worldly principles with regard to his establishment in life had so far overcome the temporary suspension which they had suffered by the appearance and distress of Caroline, that he thought the sooner her removal and a decided separation was effected the better.

Unwilling, however, again to encounter one who had already so much wrought upon his heart, and fearing the increase of her influence in a second interview, he determined not to risk its effects. Sending, therefore, for his confidential man of business, he desired arrangements to be carried into immediate effect to render Caroline independent; and, enclosing a five hundred pound note as the payment of her first year's annuity, in advance, in a letter couched in such terms as he thought most likely to soothe and console her, and still hold her in the same determination of not again seeing his son, he trusted its delivery to his agent; giving him directions to clear up every expense, and to give her any aid she might require in removing, and confirming his son's gift of all that the cottage contained.

The man of business was fortunately, a man gifted with much of the milk of human kindness, and performed his mission as tenderly as possible, indeed, so much so, that Caroline was induced to request that he would be the medium of the only farther communication she had to make to Mr. Hartley.

To this he of course agreed, and she therefore appointed the next day at noon for his next visit, and for the commencement of her removal.

All this was perfectly satisfactory to Mr. Hartley, and the less he had to fear from her, the higher Caroline rose in his estimation, and the more he pitied her fate, and condemned the conduct of his son.

The man of business was punctual to his appointment at the cottage but was surprised to learn from the servants that Caroline had quitted it that morning in a hackney-coach. The previous evening she had discharged every bill that was owing in the neighborhood, and that morning, before her departure, had paid the servants their wages, and directed that they should attend to any orders that they might receive from him. She took with her merely her portmanteaux, in which her wardrobe was packed, and evidently equipped for travelling, had departed as early as seven o'clock in the morning

In the charge of the servants she had left a letter for the man of business, and a packet addressed to Mr. Hartley, which she begged his agent would take charge of, and deliver into his own hands. Hurrying back to town with the intelligence of her departure, he immediately delivered the packet intrusted to his care, hoping it might lead to some satisfactory elucidation as to the place of her retreat. In this, however, he was disappointed. Mr. Hartley, on opening the first packet, was surprised at seeing his bank note returned, with the following letter:—

"Sir,

"In returning the enclosed mark of your bounty, and in declining to profit by your favorable intentions for the future, I beg you will not believe me to be actuated either by ingratitude or by any feeling of pride. To such a sentiment one fallen as I am must for the future be a stranger. But I cannot accept that which I must look upon as the wages of my transgression; nor be bribed, even in appearance, into that step which I know and feel to be right, and which I would adopt, even were it more painful than it is, when I see that it is for the benefit of your son, and for the happiness of his family.

"I have been weak, sir; I have been wicked; but I trust not irreclaimably so. I know my error to be beyond redemption in this world, but I have been educated with hopes that travel beyond it. This education, which should have preserved me from error, I feel only renders me more guilty. Suffice it for you, sir, that your son from henceforth is free from me—we never can meet again. This is all the assurance on my part that you can wish, all that you have a right to expect; and as I wish not to be thought by any part of his family the base thing you were led to suppose me, all I have to entreat of you, sir, is to think as leniently as your principles will admit of the errors of

"Yours, most respectfully,

"Caroline Dormer."

"P. S. The accompanying packet contains ornaments, forced upon me by the generosity of your son; and which I now respectfully beg you to return."

"Noble girl!" exclaimed Mr. Hartley, as he perused this letter; "she does indeed deserve a better fate, and we must find out her retreat, and provide for her in spite of herself."

Caroline had, however, taken such secure steps to prevent this discovery, that all the inquiries they made proved fruitless: and he was obliged to resign the hope for the present.

In the meantime, the good constitution of Hartley successfully combatted the influence of the fever, and he was rapidly approaching convalescence; when, taking the opportunity of being left alone with his own man, he inquired after Caroline.

His servant, with a rueful countenance, was at first rather shy of answering the questions put to him by his master; but Hartley, perceiving something mysterious about his manner of replying,

pressed him so closely, that he divulged all he knew on the subject; and, drawing a letter from his pocket, which he had kept there the last three days, and which he did not think it quite necessary to give to the old gentleman while there was a chance of his young master's recovery, he delivered it to Hartley, who immediately recognised Caroline's hand-writing; and, desiring his servant to see that no one interrupted him, hastily broke the seal, and read as follows:—

"Hartley, we have parted never to meet again; and, believe me, the pang that I know you will feel at this, adds severity and bitterness to my own. I intended to have accomplished this act, so necessary to your future welfare, without writing, but I find the task too great for me. I must say farewell—I should go mad were I entirely to confine my feelings within my own breast." Here agitation seemed for a moment to have stopped the writer, and the words were blotted with her tears—"Why am I so weak? Have I not a thousand times said that your happiness and welfare were my only wish? and shall I hesitate ensuring them, when I only am to be the sacrifice? No, no; I will try to be more worthy of the good opinion I know you entertain for me, in spite of all. Oh, how foolish have I been to imagine any union founded in guilt could be lasting! Oh, Hartley! I should have been innocent still but for you—have still been worthy of you, but for your own act; but I do not reproach you—I—*I* was to blame; my own self-confidence, my pride in my own strength, betrayed me. Yet, if you knew all I have suffered since! How could I expect you should continue to love me, while I loathed myself? How could I dare think for a moment that any thing could induce you to raise such a guilty thing to the honorable title of your wife? No, no; it never could have been. And Hartley, if I know myself; if I know my feelings for you: I love you and your honor too well to wish that you should ever have called her a bride whose former conduct could have brought a blush into the cheek of yourself and your family. How could I have ever looked your virtuous mother and sister in the face! But I am awakened from my persumptuous dream. I know myself; I know my guilt; I know its penalty—attempt not to seek me; it will be useless. I shall be far, far distant; but of this let me assure you, that I shall be safe—there is one who will still protect me for my father's sake; and those sorrows which I have heaped upon myself, I must learn to endure, Hartley, I do not desire you to think of me kindly, because I know you will. I know you love me too well to bear this parting without the pang that I would have spared you; but you have brilliant prospects still before you, and you will soon forget in other feelings, and in other pursuits, the pains which I know this separation will inflict. It is man's nature to do so—why are we not of the same mould? But a woman's HEART never forgets where it has once loved. Farewell, Hartley, dear Hartley! In after life, sometimes cast a thought back upon your poor girl—" Here again the paper was blotted with her tears, as though the whole tenderness and anguish of her soul had been called forth by the word "farewell"—"I dare write no more, though I could write forever. Should I, in my retreat, read or hear of your future prosperity and honors, none will rejoice in them more than your devoted, though guilty,

"CAROLINE."

The persual of this letter produced another paroxism of fever in Hartley, and for several days again was his life despaired of.

In the meantime, his father, both by himself and his agents, took every means to discover Caroline's retreat; but all in vain, she had so successfully secured herself from pursuit, that he was at length compelled to resign all hope of finding her. Several times the appalling idea of her suicide came over the mind of Mr. Hartley; but that step was so inconsistent with the method with which she had arranged her departure, and the removal of her wardrobe, as well as with the tendency of her letter, that he gladly relieved his mind from the weight of such a suspicion. He therefore gave up all farther attempts, and could only hope that at some future period he might discover her, and in some measure atone for the injury which she had received from his family.

Even Mr. Hartley imagined there were other reparations for such an injury than that of marriage; but this is the common opinion of men, ay, and of some portion of the other sex too, upon this subject.

Gold is put into the scale against a woman's feelings; competence in worldly affairs against a broken heart; and the compensation is deemed equivalent. Perhaps this sentiment is right in a country where the loss of a husband's honor is compensated by pecuniary damages, and money made the penalty for matrimonial infidelity. But the optimist says, "Whatever is, is best!" and the ergo comes of course.

It is a woman who suffers most under separations of this sort. Like a bruised reed, her vigor is blighted to its stem. She does not sink it is true; but she only *withers* weaker and weaker, till the blast lays her prostrate on the earth. Upon a man the action is different; he feels it severely at first; maddens with his disappointment; reasons, and recovers.

Thus it was with Hartley. Caroline's loss had recalled all his first feelings to his heart, or rather the recollection of them to his mind; and had his father's pursuit been successful, there is little doubt but he would have done her that justice which could alone repair her injuries. But as convalescence increased, and his hope of finding her diminished, we are sorry to say there came a feeling almost of relief to his mind, that she had by an act of her own put that out of his power, which he dreaded more than he wished.

Oh man! to think that a woman, who,

——— had she been
In heaven, could have lent him her eternity,

should be thus coldly treated; thus easily forgotten; or thus slightly lamented!

There are two grand recipes for all kinds of sorrows—occupation and change of scene.

To unite these two, it was determined that Hartley should at once proceed to the Continent, and

there spend two or three years, previously to engaging in that public life to which his station in society called him. As it is our intention to accompany him a part of the way on his tour, we must even see, or let our readers see, the state in which we leave our dramatist personæ in England.

Emily returned with her parents to her dear little apartments and flower garden at the Grove, like a child heartily sick of the world which had disappointed her; heartily ashamed of the weakness she had betrayed; and still trembling at the danger she had escaped, of becoming the wife of a libertine and a hypocrite. There she avoided all society, and particularly that of Forrester; gave her young mind up to deeper reflection than had ever yet engaged it; and laid down a little course of penitence for her "Follies of a Season."

Lady Orville, with her family, retired for the summer to an old family seat, where solitude was rendered tolerable by the society of a few of her old associates, and by those who can carry ombre and écarté into the country. Here she lamented over those projects which had been disappointed; reflected over old schemes, and imagined new.

Langley was at the height of his happiness, only regretting that his prosperity was not derived from his own exertions. He determined, however, at once to use his wife's fortune in such a manner as to double it; resolved to embark on a grand scale in schemes of commerce and finance, and was already in his own opinion a second Rothschild. As though he was doomed, however, to disappointment, the Admiral, in one of his passions at the delay of his lawyers, which prevented his making his niece independent, dropped down dead in a fit of apoplexy, with his will, in favor of Langley and his wife, *unsigned*, in his pocket.

A week had not elapsed before there appeared fifty claimants on the estate of the deceased Admiral. Bills and cross bills are filed; injunctions were moved for and granted; and Langley, instead of an easy and comfortable fortune, found himself involved in the almost interminable intricacies of Chancery into which court all the assets were paid, with the comfortable assurance from his solicitor that in about twenty years some termination might be put to the *friendly* suits that were instituted to put the Admiral's property into possession of the rightful proprietor.

Lascelles went on in his old career, till between Newmarket, Doncaster, Epsom, C———'s, and the Melton, he found that he was perpetually compelled to have recourse to old Langley, who had inherited the fortune that poor Langley had considered his own, and to pay 16 per cent. in spite of the sermon against usury, which Vaux actually preached at his induction to his living.

Before departing for the continent, Hartley wrote the following letter to his friend Strictland.

"I begin to think, my dear Strictland, that you were right! and from my uncircumscribed liberty of the great world, to envy you the limited precincts of your rooms at Oxford. I have lived in the world but one season, and during that short period, have tried and been disappointed in every thing. Friends have proved heartless; pleasure produced remorse: passion made inroads on my health and happiness; those who were all smiles, have been deceitful; and every profession has had its origin in my fortune and expectations. I am now quitting England, disgusted with the world, and were I to estimate my own powers and inclinations, I am only fit for La Trappe; since my feelings, hopes, and expectations are dead. 'Tis a vile world, my masters;' and so it has proved to one, who is nevertheless, as ever, yours,

"Francis Hartley."

The course of post which seems to run on as unerringly as the course of time, brought the following note from Strictland:

"My dear Hartley,

"Depend on it the world is as much better than you now describe it to be, as it is worse than you so fondly imagined it eight months ago. Look through all that has passed during this, to you, eventful season: and tracing how much of your unhappiness you have made for yourself, you will acquit the world of, at least, one half of the delinquencies which you attach to it at present.

"Let the past have its proper influence on the future, and you may still be as rationally happy as the imperfections of our nature will allow.

"Yours, ever,

"Charles Strictland."

CHAPTER XXX.

SECOND LOVE.

There are two faults which mankind are perpetually finding with time—the one that he flies too swiftly and leaves no leisure for enjoyment; the other that he lags on his road and gives weariness to every passing hour by the slowness of his progress. This is one of the multitude of contraries by which human wishes are characterized. With the novelist, time must fly or stand still at the author's pleasure; and we must now not only trespass upon the reader's imagination to suppose many months to have elapsed since the closing of the last chapter; but also to allow us to crowd the history of a couple of years into the present.

It was nearly a year after the events related in the preceding chapter, that Hartley was on his way from Rome to Naples. Paris had held out her dissipations and pleasures in vain, to tempt his stay in that gay metropolis; but Hartley was tired of gayety, and thought himself divorced forever from every thought of pleasure. Switzerland, with its scenery was more suited to the present temperament of his mind; and it was amid the solitude of the mighty Alps, that he gave himself up to reflections on his past life, and became a better man and more worthy of his fortunes and existence, from their effects upon his mind and heart. It was here that he saw the wickedness of having sacrificed the happiness of a fellow-being to a heartless pursuit; and ruined the fame and the hopes of another, merely for a sensual and selfish gratification.

Uninfluenced by pernicious example, he called up the worthier part of himself into existence, and felt that he was born for something better than the mere gratification of his passions. He recalled all the earlier principles instilled into his mind by his mother; he saw his late conduct in the heinous light in which it deserved to be considered, and his heart became purified as it bled at the recollection of the fate in which he had involved an innocent and injured being. What were all the pleasures he had derived from his short-lived intercourse with Caroline, in comparison with the pains he experienced in his repentance? And if his feelings were thus severe, what, thought he, must be hers who had sacrificed her all? What must be her sensation to look back upon a blighted name, and forward to a life of dishonor? The uncertainty, too, of her fate added to the bitterness of his present thoughts.

During the period passed in Switzerland, all the better sentiments of his youth regained their ascendancy in the mind of Hartley; he saw the heartlessness of the people by whom he had been surrounded, he blushed to have been so easily led to follow in courses which he despised, and he made resolutions for his future conduct, by which he hoped to redeem the errors of the past. Who is there, not totally hardened, that has not these periods of repentance; and when these feelings come upon a mind and heart not yet hackneyed in the ways of vice, their influence is generally beneficial.

His passions softened down by these months of silent thought, and his mind elevated by the contemplation of the sublime scenery of the Alps—for nothing is more conducive to virtuous feelings than the admiration of the sublime works of the Creator as they appear in these mountainous solitudes—Hartley, on re-entering active life, beheld the world in a different point of view. It was no longer a mere career of heartless pleasure; no longer a course of dissipated pursuits, or a series of trifles and follies—but an active business and a succession of arduous duties, the performance of which was rendered more imperative by the high station and advantages with which he was born.

With his mind in this state he traversed the greatest part of Italy, and by the enjoyment of his classical recollections, and by a contemplation of the works of art which abound in that land of painting, poetry, and music, he gradually brought his feelings back to that tone which rendered existence desirable. He travelled, not merely delighted to roam over the surface of the Peninsula, where nature and art, as if in rivalry, have assembled their choicest treasures—but he searched beneath the soil, and found there matters of deeper and sadder interest—monuments of glory vanished, of dominion forgotten—vestiges of the lost arts of Etruria and Greece, mingled confusedly with the records of Roman and Gothic grandeur.

Hartley had, however, some difficulty in the enjoyment of the reflections which these thoughts engendered clea· of his countrymen, who infest every little town in the Peninsula with their coteries, and carry London, with its customs into Italy; emulating each other in their entertainments as much within the walls of the Eternal City, as in Grosvenor square or St. James's. Indeed, many of them seemed to have come to Rome for no other purpose than to give dinners and soirees; and the only art seemed to study was, whose palazzo should be the most crowded.

Hartley was too well known about town, not to be known to at least half of the fashionable Zingari in Rome, and was therefore glad to quit the city as soon as he had seen all that was worthy of notice. He felt, however, that there was food for reflection for years instead of days in the ruins of a city so pregnant with the history of human grandeur and of human decadence; but the associations inspired by these objects, were destroyed by meeting the same faces that he had encountered the preceding season in a London drawing-room or at a London dinner-table.

One circumstance detained him in Rome some days longer than he intended, though he would not own its influence even to himself; for he had determined in his own mind that woman should in future be indifferent to him. Hartley was passionately fond of music, and to indulge this taste he would frequently at vespers stroll into a convent in the·neighborhood of his apartments, which was notorious for the excellent manner in which this service was performed. One evening he was struck by the notes of a powerful voice, which rose above the others in harmony and sweetness, so distinctly, that he could easily perceive the singer to be a young female within the grating, ranged among the novices, but without being clad in their costume. So absorbed was she in her occupation, that her veil had been suffered to fall on one side, discovering features remarkable for beauty, which was now heightened by the expression of devotion with which her large black eyes were raised to the altar. Hartley gazed on this fair creature till the service was finished and the devotees dispersed, but unable to shake off the impression which her beauty had created, and the curiosity excited by her appearance, he contrived to make some inquiries of the porteress the next day, when he found that she had been merely placed in the convent for a few nights during the absence of her guardian, who was a friend of the lady abbess, and with whom she had that very morning taken her departure, but whether she was still in Rome his informer could not ascertain. Hardly able to account for the impression which this beautiful stranger had made upon him, he lingered in Rome, frequenting every public place in the hope of again seeing her. His attempts were however in vain; and at length ashamed of what appeared to him a weakness unworthy of him, he determined to drive her from his recollection and pursue his journey.

Quitting Rome therefore by the Porta de S. Lorenzo, he pursued his journey leisurely, and soon crossing the Ponte della Solfaterra, again began to enjoy in the solitude of his own thoughts, the associations connected with the country through which he was passing. The supposed sites of the Tusculan villa of Cicero, and of the Sabine farm of Horace, by turns engaged his attention. The field, too, celebrated by the history of the Horatii and Curatii called up the glories of ancient Rome to his imagination, which was not likely to be banished by the sight of the Pomptine Marshes or the Appian way, over which his britchka was roll-

ing. Nor was his eye less delighted with the landscape that presented itself to his view, than his mind had been with the historical associations which it recalled. The Promontory of Circe towering on the one side, and the glittering rock of Anxur on the other, while the Volscian mountains sweeping in a bold semicircle from north to south closed the prospect, proved altogether a landscape well worthy the pencil of a Claude; while the powers of Salvator might have peopled with banditti the deep shadows of the extensive forests, which enclose the lakes bordering the coast, and which extend with little interruption from Ostia to the promontory of Circe.

It was a lovely evening in the height of an Italian summer, that Hartley was wrapt in the enjoyment of this beautiful scene. Every thing was quiet around him; the blue and unclouded sky, warm with the refulgence of a setting sun, which gilded the deep and varying color of the landscape—the tumuli and ruins, glittering in the beams, or throwing a shadow on the sides of the mountain—all invited him to contemplation, and induced him to stop his carriage and to walk ap the acclivity, which it was now gently ascending.

While indulging in these contemplations, a travelling cavalcade, consisting of two carriages, with a courier and several servants, appeared in sight. The equipages were evidently English, and as they arrived at the foot of the hill which Hartley was slowly ascending, they stopped, and the traveller alighted apparently with the same intention.

Hartley had stopped to catch a glimpse at the ancient towns of Cora, Sezza, and Piperno, like ærial palaces shining in contrast with the brown, rugged rock that supports them, when the traveller arrived at the spot where he stood. On his first appearance Hartley had some difficulty in determining whether his elegant stranger, for elegant he certainly was, was an Englishman or a foreigner; but as he gracefully saluted him in his native language all doubt of his country was removed by his accent.

"I see, sir, you are enjoying this delicious scenery, and most probably recalling all the recollections connected with the interesting spots by which we are surrounded. I trust I do not interrupt your reflections; but I am not one of those Englishmen who can pass my countrymen in the solitude of a foreign land without recognition, however I may be inclined to cut them when they congregate, and contrive to turn an Italian town into an English watering place," said the stranger.

"Not at all," replied Hartley, "I was indeed indulging in the classical associations with which this spot is so pregnant, recalling the times of Roman virtue to my imagination, and the greatness of the arts by which this scenery has been celebrated."

"Virtue!" exclaimed the stranger; "Roman Virtue! and to what did it lead but corruption? In what did their greatness end but in their destruction? And after all, what else did it deserve? What prompted the actions you admire but their thirst of power?—what gave them that which you call virtue, but a vile ambition? Yet, as you say, the spot is pregnant with classical recollections. There stands Setia celebrated by Martial for its wines:—

Quæ paludes delicata promptinas
Ex arce clivi spectat uva Setini;

it is a pity that the grapes should have lost their flavor. The worst thing that Nero did was to spoil the wine, by carrying his famous canal across the Vale of Amyclæ. But water never did wine any good! There runs the Amasenus too, as deep and rapid as when Metabus reached its banks—

————Amasenus abundans
Spumabit ripis.

And there rises Anxur with its steep cliffs, which seem marching into the sea—'superbus Anxur,' as Martial calls it; and there the colonades of the temples of Jupiter and Apollo,

Arcesque superbi Anxuris,

as Statius describes them."

There was a degree of levity mingled with these observations, which betrayed the carelessness with which the stranger viewed the scenes which he was describing; at the same time that a tide of classic recollection seemed to rush upon his mind, which ought almost to have rendered them sacred.

They now agreed to mount their saddle-horses and ride a little in advance of the carriages, and the stranger recovering himself from a temporary melancholy, again delighted Hartley by his conversation; although his remarks had certainly a tendency to destroy anything like the existence of virtue in human nature. He pointed out Mount Cæcubus, celebrated by Horace; the Tormiæ, the theatre of the great disaster of Ulysses; Prochyta, and towering

Inarime, Jovis imperiis importa Typhæo.

The mausoleum of Munatius, the Tormian villa, and the supposed tomb of Cicero, with all the other mementoes of ancient lore with which the Appian way is crowded, by turns engaged their attention, till they arrived in the defiles of Mount Massicus, which communicate with those of the Collicula, a mountain covered with forests. From these defiles they emerged by a road cut through the rock, and stopped in wonder as the plains of Campania, bordered by the Appenines, spread before them. The craggy point of Ischia towered to the sky on one side, while Vesuvius, with its double summit wreathed in smoke, rose in the centre.

The evening was now far advanced, and the setting sun shed a purple tint over the sides and summits of the mountain, giving at once a softness and a richness to the picture, contrasting finely with the darkness of the plains below, and the gessamer clouds sailing above.

While they were engaged in the contemplation of this scene, Hartley, with the eye of an enthusiast, the stranger with the apathy of satiety, the courier of the latter rode up, and respectfully reminded his master of the approaching night, and of the supposed vicinity of the banditti, who infested the boundaries which divided the territories of Rome and Naples.

At this instant a shrill whistle was heard, imme-

diately succeeded by a loud and piercing scream. The travellers started. The sound evidently came from one of the defiles, the mouth of which they had just passed. Hartley, with the first impulse, turned his horse and galloped in the direction from which the sound seemed to proceed. The stranger less moved, called after him to stop, but finding that he called in vain, contented himself with blaming what he deemed his mad career, but followed him with the servants.

Hartley proceeded to the entrance of the first defile, but had hardly gained it when a still louder scream, which evidently came in that direction, banished every prudential motive; and in despite of the ruggedness of the road, he spurred his spirited steed through brake and brier, and plunged at once into the dark and deep ravine, careless where it might lead, so long as it brought him nearer to the object he determined to assist.

The screams now became fainter, but whether from weakness or distance he was unable to determine, when issuing from the dark underwood, through which his horse had with difficulty forced his way, he discovered a narrow winding foot or bridle path leading to a road that passed through the valley that lay smiling at some distance beneath him. A large projecting rock at first intercepted his view, but as he passed it, a scene presented itself which roused all his young blood into action, and strung every nerve with indignation. On one side of a large patch of brushwood, two men with ferocious aspect, were standing over the body of an old man whom they were stripping, while they compelled him to keep his face buried in the earth, that he might not be able to recognize them at any future period; while the third was rifling the person of an elderly woman, whose eyes were tightly bound with a handkerchief. On the other side of the wood, and considerably nearer to Hartley, two more ruffians were dragging by force a younger female, by whom the screams which had first attracted him were uttered. She was on her knees, her hands in the rude grasp of the ruffians, her hat lying at some distance, and her dishevelled and disordered hair floating in the wind. In the road below stood the humble vehicle in which the party had travelled, with the postillion sitting a quiet spectator of the scene, while two small rough horses were tied to the stumps of a tree, at the entrance of another defile, at the foot of the precipice Hartley was descending, which appeared to communicate with the other side of the mountain.

The ruffians were clad in a kind of half uniform, or rather the worn-out appendages of what had once been the costume of a regular soldier. Careless of their numbers, Hartley pushed his horse at all hazards down the precipice that divided him from the scene of action; a scream of delight from the female, and a savage yell from her assailants, proclaimed the discovery of his appearance. In a moment the hands of the prisoner were released, and a shot from a carbine whistled close to Hartley's ear. Another, better directed, struck his generous and spirited steed; and he had scarcely time to disentangle himself from the stirrups, ere the poor beast sunk into the brushwood, and struggling, rolled into the plain below. Hartley had fortunately drawn a pistol from the holster, and lightly leaping through the only remaining obstacles that separated him from the first party, he discharged his pistol with such good aim that one of the ruffians fell before he could accomplish a second shot, that might have been fatal, while with a powerful blow, with that true English weapon, the fist, and which none but Englishmen know how to use with such good effect, he levelled the other astonished Italian to the earth.

Fortunately for Hartley, the ruffians had already dragged their victim to such a distance from their companions as to preclude the possibility of their giving immediate assistance; but attracted by the shots, they had suddenly quitted their plunder, and were now, with savage aspects and loud imprecations, approaching to revenge and assist their comrades.

The young female, still on her knees, clung to Hartley for protection, while he armed with the carbine of the fallen robber, courageously waited for their approach, although he felt the uselessness of his resistance; all he could do was to utter a word of encouragement to his unfortunate companion, and determined to sell his life as dearly as possible in her defence.

At this moment loud shouts were heard above, and Hartley's fellow traveller was seen rapidly descending the precipice, accompanied by his own and Hartley's servants. They were discovered at the same instant by the banditti, who, alarmed at such a reinforcement, hastily discharged their carbines, and reaching their horses, galloped off, leaving their companions to their fate.

In a few minutes the stranger and the servants were by the side of Hartley, who stood still on his defence, supporting the half-dying girl, whom his gallantry had thus rescued from a fate to which death was preferable, and who had now fainted from excess of agitation and excitement. Hartley hastily removed the long tresses with which her face was covered, that the air might blow upon her more freely, and to his inexpressible astonishment, discovered the features of the individual with whose person he had been so much struck at the convent in Rome. A feeling almost allied to that of pleasure, even at such a moment as this, crossed his mind at a discovery which rendered him still more anxious for her security. Water was quickly procured, and as her recollection slowly returned, and she became sensible of her late danger and present safety, she cast a glance at her deliverer, which fully repaid him for all that he had done. At this instant he perceived the eyes of the stranger traveller fixed upon her person with a freedom of gaze that displeased him; his look seemed to be scanning the fair proportions of her form with the knowledge of a libertine connoisseur in female loveliness; and Hartley shrunk from the look, at the same time that he placed himself in a position to prevent its offending the female, whose eyes were still fixed upon him with an expression of gratitude, and who was attempting to articulate her thanks for her preservation.

The old gentleman and lady could scarcely be prevailed on to believe in the reality of their safety; and when convinced of it were far more solicitous about their baggage, than to show their gratitude.

The postillion now lent his assistance towards securing the wounded ruffian and his companion who had been stunned by his fall, and the whole

party were soon ready to proceed on their route; which they did in company till their arrival at the next stage, where the bandit were delivered over to the proper authorities, and where all the travellers determined to pass the night.

A little nervous from the alarm which she had experienced, and delighted that the preservation of herself and her companions had been effected without injury to their persons, Hartley's fair incognita met the party at supper with renovated spirits and beauty. She was one of those persons who not only strike the beholder at first sight, but for whom this first feeling of admiration rather increases than diminishes on acquaintance.

She was tall and luxuriantly proportioned; her large dark eye, curtained with long silken lashes, spoke a mind alive to all the sensibilities of human nature; her high forehead bespoke deeper thought than generally falls to the lot of one so young; while the varied expression of her countenance appeared to reflect the feelings of her heart. Tears started to her eyes, as she again expressed her gratitude to her preserver: and she shuddered as her mind recurred to the probable fate from which he had rescued her. Her protectors too were profuse in their expressions of gratitude, but there was a coldness in their manner, and a lurking suspicion in their look, that ill-accorded with their words.

During supper, and the short conversation that followed, Hartley could scarcely withdraw his eyes from Agnese, for by this appellation she was addressed by her chaperons, who were evidently displeased at the admiration which she excited. The stranger traveller did not pay her less attention, although he was more guarded in his expressions and looks than his young companion. Sometimes his eye assumed that libertine expression which had at first struck and offended Hartley; but after he had gazed at her for a time, some thought or recollection seemed to cross his mind, that changed the expression of his glance.

In the little conversation that passed during supper, Agnese betrayed a mind of deep feeling, and an enthusiasm mingled with much more good sense than is its general accompaniment. She spoke with rapture of the poets of her own country, among whom Dante seemed to have engrossed most of her attention and admiration, though she acknowledged that his own words,

Al segno de mortai si sopra prose.

were applicable to many parts of his sublime poem. "He indeed." said she, comparing him with other poets, "soars high above them all, like the eagle to which he himself has compared Homer.

"Che sopra gli' altri con' aquila vola."

She understood English, too, and spoke it with an accent that surprised our travellers, and betrayed quite an English feeling in the admiration she expressed of our Shakspeare.

As Hartley gazed and listened, he drank deeply of the passion he thought he had forsworn for ever. In contemplating Agnese, all the names he had known sank in the comparison and giving up his whole love to the feelings of the moment, he forgot that she was an unknown foreigner; his family and their wishes were again forgotten; and he was on the brink of the same precipice from which h- had so lately escaped. Such uncertain mortals are we, when this predominant power of our hearts is concerned.

Agnese was early withdrawn by her protectors, who avoided giving the travellers any clue to their situation and pursuits. Her hand trembled in that of Hartley's, as she softly whispered her "good night," and the sensation was communicated to his heart with the quickness of electricity. As the door closed upon her receding form, the world seemed to be shut out from him. It was in vain he rallied—in vain endeavored to keep up the conversation on any other subject than that of the fair stranger; and here the irreverence with which his companion spoke of the sex in general; the lightness and levity of his remark with regard to female virtue, and the libertine comments he made on the person and beauty of Agnese, jarred discordantly upon the feelings which she had excited in his mind.

They soon parted for the night; Hartley disgusted with the libertine coldness of his companion, and he in his turn smiling, if not jeering at the enthusiasm of Hartley.

After a restless night Hartley rose early, in the hope of seeing Agnese; but what was his surprise at being informed that she and her companions had quitted the inn at the dawn of day, leaving only a written repetition of their thanks. All that he could hear, was, that they had taken the road to Naples, when he determined to lose no time in following them, in the faint hope that chance might again befriend him by throwing Agnese in his way.

His fellow-traveller experienced no surprise at this sudden departure. He spoke of it as the common want of politeness of those upon whom benefits were conferred; hinted his suspicions that Agnese was some adventuress; and congratulated himself and Hartley on their escape. A close discerner, however, would have read more in his looks and manners than his words conveyed. But Hartley was too much absorbed in his own feelings, and too much annoyed by these observations, to look farther than their general meaning; and, anxious to commence his pursuit, he would have taken his departure at once, had not the stranger asked for his name, that he might at some future period claim a farther acquaintance with "his enthusiastic young companion." At the same time that he made this request, he presented his own card as "Mr. Arlingford." Little as Hartley felt inclined to renew an acquaintance so casually commenced, he could do no less than give his own card in return, and could not help feeling surprised at the effect which it produced on Mr. Arlingford.

"Hartley!" exclaimed he: "what, of Hartley Grove, the son of Lady Emily Hartley?" and he looked inquisitively at Hartley, while his eye measured the athletic proportions of his really fine person.

"The same," replied Hartley. "Do you know my mother?"

"I did," answered Arlingford, "in days long since past;" and a shade appeared to cloud his features at the recollections which the name seemed to have brought to his mind.

He again looked at Hartley almost rudely, and

the scrutiny seemed to be anything but pleasing to him.

"Well, sir," said he, "we part; but I have no doubt we shall meet ere long, either here or in England. In the meantime, beware, sir, of the arts of Italian adventuresses; any connection with them will be as displeasing to Lady Emily and Mr. Hartley as they would be to"——He stopped suddenly, as though he had gone too far, and finished his sentence, by saying, as "they would tend to your own unhappiness. Farewell, sir;" and Arlingford quitted the room, leaving Hartley not a little surprised at this recognition of his family, as well as to the oddness of the manner with which it had been acknowledged. With the feelings which were growing in his heart for Agnese, however, he had little room for reflection upon what interested him so little. He therefore mounted his carriage, and gave up his mind to all those delicious sensations which a newly-created passion excites, as it rolled on through Capua to Naples.

From the termination of his adventure with Caroline Dormer, Hartley had conceived himself proof against the influence of another passion, and little anticipated that his heart would be thus taken by suprise.

When first Hartley saw Agnese in the church, he could not resist a secret presentiment that the interests of the being whose beauty and devotion he was contemplating, were in some way or other mingled with his own; and his preservation of her from the robbers tended very naturally to confirm this feeling.

The very idea too of having preserved her from such a fate added to the tenderness of his sentiments towards her; for it is one of the traits of human nature to love those whom we have saved or protected.

No wonder that these feelings, added to the great personal attraction of Agnese, should kindle the feeling of love in such a breast as Hartley's; and though he had latterly been in the habit of doubting the possibility of love at first sight, he could not but confess that he felt it. Not that love which grows, and like a child gets by slow degrees to its perfection; but such a passion, as, like the first man, came created in its full strength at the first minute—that love which

> Only gains from time
> To be called constant, not reversed.

In fact, though our hero must sink in the esteem of our female readers, thus to forget Caroline, and to feel love a second time, let me write of human nature, and not of superhuman constancy.

We could fill a volume with a description of Hartley's pursuit and discovery of Agnese; of the stolen interviews which she granted him; and the history of the progress of that passion, which, according to Hartley's presentiment, united both their fates in one.

Their love seemed to have imbibed its ardor from the climate under which it was fostered, and the only drawback on its indulgence, was the mystery by which the birth and history of Agnese were surrounded, and the coldness with which Hartley's attentions were received by her protectors. Of herself Agnese knew nothing, but that she had been educated in a conservatorio of music, for the purpose of being a public singer, and, in spite of natural repugnance to the profession, she was now perfecting herself in the necessary accomplishments under the first professors of the day.

In spite of his resolution, Hartley was thus a second time involving himself in an attachment, which he knew must be displeasing to his family; but he now loved with a fervor of the permanency of which he was convinced; and in drawing a comparison between his present feelings and those he experienced for Caroline, he could only wonder how he had ever thought that he loved her.

Before Hartley, however, could systematize any plan, the object of his attachment suddenly quitted Naples, leaving only a short note, saying that her protectors thought it prudent to remove her, and that all pursuit was vain. The same day a letter arrived from his father, couched in rather angry tones, recalling him instantly to England.

The coincidence of these circumstances, together with the tone of his father's letter, inferred the suspicion that his family was not ignorant of his attachment; and his good sense suggested that his best plan was to return, and to make his father his friend and confidant.

Towards England, therefore, Hartley shifted his course, taking the best steps he could through various emissaries, to ascertain the retreat of Agnese.

In England he pursued his plan of making confidants of Mr. Hartley and Lady Emily, and, in spite of the prejudices which they both naturally possessed, and those they had imbibed from some correspondent who had informed them of their son's attachment to an unknown Italian, educating for the stage, he succeeded in interesting them in favor of Agnese.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE RETURN.

It was a bright day, at the commencement of spring, when the warmth of the sun in its meredian would almost make those who felt its influence, believe the summer to be already come—that one of the numerous packets, which now keep up such a continual correspondence between England and France, through the short sea dividing Dover from Calais, was descried from Shakspeare's Cliff.

Well—the packet made the pier; a dense white mist rushing through the valves of the engines, told the spectators that the steam had been stopped. Passengers ran to their portmanteaux, sacs de nuits, and the numerous other conveniences, in which their travelling wardrobes had been packed, or in which, cunningly enfolded in stockings or linen, lay hid their little "contrabandages." Some hurried to the shore, exhibiting pale faces, which depicted their recent suffering, careless of every thing but once more placing their feet upon terra firma: and abandoning their luggage to the Custom-house officer, sought for nothing but relief

from the heart-appalling oppression of sea-sickness. while more experienced or hardened voyagers, smiling at this distress of their fellow-passengers, coolly watched their packages into the hands of the officers, and followed them to the place of examination; anxious only to get to an English inn, or an English coach-office, to secure their first English meal, or a place outside or inside the first London coach.

Lashed on the deck appeared two carriages, the one a britschka, and the other a travelling chariot. Their panels proclaimed no aristocratic owner, as they were quite plain; but the shape, bearings, and appointment of the vehicles themselves, showed that they belonged to a person of the most perfect taste in such affairs, while the dark gray livery jackets, without facings of the two men who were assisting the seamen in unlashing them, under the superintendence of a courier, habited after a foreign fashion, bespoke the proprietor to be a man of no common rank. An elderly Frenchman ascended the deck, and despatched one of the servants ashore, who was presently seen returning with four pair of posthorses, denoting the traveller's intention to proceed immediately. A paper, shown by the same Frenchman to the Custom-house officers, not only prevented their detaining the carriages and the luggage they contained, as they had every thing else on board the packet, but even induced them to lend every assistance to facilitate the departure of their proprietor without any examination.

The carriages were, at length, safely landed; the horses were put to them; and when every thing was ready to depart, the Frenchman again went on board the packet, and descended to the cabin.

The Frenchman remounted the deck, and was speedily followed by the anxiously looked-for traveller; he was rather above the middle height, yet not to be called tall—remarkably elegant in the bearing of his figure, and in the carriage of his person. A dark frock coat, of that indescribable color so nearly approaching to black, was buttoned tight round his body, up close to the chin, with loose trowsers of the same material. A collar of the most beautiful sable was the only piece of coxcombry in his dress. A loose travelling cap was placed carelessly on his head, and his whole appearance, at a distance, gave the spectators the idea of a man about thirty. A nearer approach, however, which revealed the lines of his features, soon destroyed this illusion, and bespoke him to be nearer fifty, spite of that elasticity of gait, which he was at evident pains to preserve. He held a book in his hand, which he appeared to have been just reading. When he first mounted the deck, he cast one inquisitive glance towards the shore, by which one might have imagined him to have been absent from England for a long period; but there was no appearance of pleasure in that glance; no appearance of emotion or sensation of any kind, at again treading on his native land; all appeared apathy.

The gaze and curiosity of the spectators were totally lost upon him, as he passed through them, with an eye that appeared to see and to notice nothing The two liveried men had the door open, and the well carpeted steps down to the ground, displaying the dark green lining of the interior of the carriage. As he mounted, he turned for a moment to the Frenchman, who was obsequiously following with a superb roquelaire, lined with ermine, lying over his arm, and said in French:

"Montez donc, La Tour,"

"Oui, Monsieur," replied the obsequious valet, and followed his master into the carriage, which was immediately closed.

The courier vaulted into the dickey, in the front of the britschka. The two lackeys mounted the rumble-tumble of the chariot, and away went both vehicles, enveloping the curious spectators in a cloud of dust.

Our readers may easily imagine the traveller to be Lord Arlington, who, tired of the Continent, and for other purposes, determined at last to try to find some relief from his restlessness in his native country.

Arrived in Audley-square, the whole of this magnificent establishment was ready to receive him; but he no longer recognized, in the advanced age of his servants, those who had waited upon him twenty years before; and he retired to his dressing-room in disgust, followed by La Tour, who could only shrug his shoulders, and exclaim, "Mon Dieu! comme ils sont changés,—tout le monde s'est vieilli!"

Although upwards of twenty years had elapsed since Lord Arlington had quitted his native country, his heart felt no joy at his return. He came back more from the anxiety for that perpetual change upon which his satiated existence almost depended, than from any wish to revisit the land of his birth. A love of country is a virtue which even the savage bears to his native wilds—

> The naked negro panting at the line,
> Boasts of his golden sands and palmy wine;
> The shudd'ring tenant of the frigid zone,
> Boldly proclaims the happiest state his own.

But Arlington possessed not this virtue; he was too thoughtless an egotist; all his love was centered in himself, by which his heart was so engrossed, that there was not room for another sensation. Although he could not yet number half a century of winters, he had outlived all the pleasures of his existence. He had drained the cup of sensual delights to the very dregs, till all that was formerly pleasure now only palled upon his senses. He lived but in a variety, which it was the study of his whole life to create. His heart had become passionless, and his senses so *usés*, that there remained scarcely the possibility of a new excitement. Thrown early into life, the possessor of a princely fortune, and of great personal accomplishments, he had devoted the whole of his powers to the pursuits of libertinism; had paved the path of his career with the broken hearts and defamed honors of his victims; had gloried in the ruin which he termed success, and had shuddered at no sacrifice, which procured for him the unworthy enjoyment of a momentary triumph; till pleasures had done upon him the work of time, and ploughed upon his brows those furrows which others derive alone from age.

> Disfurnished him of active blood, and wrapp'd
> Him half in sear cloth.

The last act of his career, by which he had plunged an angelic being into a disgrace which destroyed her, by tempting her into a marriage with him, while he had actually another wife upon the continent, had been so flagrant, that his rank would scarcely have preserved him from its consequences. He had therefore quitted England, and, under a feigned name, had in every capital of Europe been guilty of the same excesses which had characterized his conduct in his own country. But though libertinism may, in some light and unthinking minds, claim an apology for the heat of young blood, and the madness of youthful passion, there is nothing can palliate the disgust it excites, when it is accompanied by the years that would have taught experience, and by the experience which should have checked its progress. Every grey hair that appeared in Lord Arlington's head—every additional line that his excesses ploughed in his cheek, were so many reproaches to his profligacy—the more deep and bitter, as every one proclaimed him to be nearer the close of those unworthy enjoyments which had been the sole pursuits of his life.

None find it so difficult to grow old gracefully as the hackneyed libertine. The mere sensualist has no reflections to fall back upon—no character upon which to build himself a respectable old age—nothing but regret for the past—nothing but despair for the future; the powers upon which his pleasures were dependent are daily diminishing, and he has nothing but the weakness, with none of the respectability, of age to anticipate.

The first symptoms of that satiety, which is the constant attendant of a mere life of pleasure, is observable in that continued wish for variety which is never satisfied. This, Lord Arlington had painfully felt for years. It was in vain that he changed his place of residence—vain that he varied the objects of his pursuit; his princely fortune could not procure a pleasure that produced him satisfaction.

At length, fatigued with endless and useless pursuits, he suddenly bethought himself that perhaps his own country might afford something like novelty to his exhausted mind; and that his native air might have the effect of renovation to the failing powers of his constitution

He embraced the idea with avidity, and never rested till he was again seated in his family mansion in Audley square. Twenty years before, in the flagrance of his triumphant career, he had boldly dashed into the circles of ton, and had carried fashion by storm. But it was different now. His heart and mind were of the same restless nature as at that period; but excess had paralyzed his nerve, and he felt it necessary to proceed with caution, and to fortify himself by all those adjuncts which his fortune could produce, to ensure him a favorable reception. In this return, Arlington could promise himself none of those delights which arise from the revival of old friendships; for a libertine has no friends. But he had imbibed an idea that the scenes of his earliest pleasures might recall a portion of those hours of enjoyment which had so nearly deserted him, and that recollection might give a factitious freshness to the attempt at their repetition. What the immediate effect of his return upon his own mind was, may be seen by the following letter, written to a libertine companion, on his arrival at his own house:

LORD ARLINGTON TO FREDERICK VILLARS.

"Well, Villars, I am again in London. After a lapse of near twenty years, I am again in the midst of all those scenes where we have both acted such prominent parts; and here are the same houses, the same squares, the same monuments, all as strong and fresh as ever; every thing the same, excepting the people, and they are the only things which seem to have grown older. Strange! is it not, Fred? that man, the lord of all the paramount creatures of the creation, to whose fiat every thing mundane bows, should exhibit more decay than the tree he plants, and the house he builds. Yet so it is; his own acts live and flourish a practical mockery of his own decay. We are born to create things which outlive ourselves. Surely this must be some fault in the general mechanism of the universe—there is my house in Audley square,—my mansions in the country—the works of my ancestors, not only outliving those who built them, but outliving me—a little gilding, paint, and whitewash, and they are as fresh as ever; while their master—but I hate to think of it:—to grow old—to grow impotent in action, and yet feel the fires of the heart—the impulse of the mind as hot and fresh as ever;—to find all paralyzed, save those passions which have acted like the lava of the volcano, rendering every thing black, black, and sterile above it. For time has not preached my tumultuous pulse to rest, although he has sprinkled his snow upon my hair, and ploughed his cursed furrows in my cheek! Old, did I say—and yet I am not old; what is half a century amid the many hundred years of time—amid the teeming myriads of ages which compose Eternity.—Eternity!—'tis a word I hate, because I dread it—yet could I be sure of its enjoyment *here*—but I will not write about it—I will not think about it—I will not believe in it. Why was I not born in those days of Methusalem, when men came to years of discretion at ninety, and when the grand climateric was five hundred, instead of a paltry fifty years?

"Fifty—and after all what are fifty years?—the age of a mere boy. Why Isocrates, whom old Valerias Maximus calls a 'longæ et felicis industriæ exemplum,' did not write his noblest work till he was ninety-four, and how was this work styled? why, 'Opus ardentis spiritus plenum, ex quo apparet senescentibus membris, eruditiorem intus animum industriæ beneficio, florem juventæ retinere,' and am I to lose the 'ardentis spiritus plenum,' and the 'Florum juventæ' at fifty?

"Carneades, whose opinion that nothing was perceived or understood in the world we use to enjoy in our youth, was dismissed from Rome by Cato, from the fear of his corrupting the Roman youth, when he was near ninety. Chrysippus, whose freedom of opinion on the subject of women, gave a color to our own, died in a fit of laughter at eighty, with a goblet in his hand, and might have lived another score or years, had he not made so free with his bottle. Simonides obtained a poetical prize at eighty, and added four letters to the Greek alphabet at ninety. Old Sophocles did not die till

he was ninety-one, and then only through excess of joy, like an old fool, because he won the prize at the Olympic games. If his tragedy had been damned, he might have lived till now, in propria personæ, instead of in mere posthumous fame. What an ugly word that posthumous is! You see, Fred, I am refreshing myself with the remembrance of all these centenarians who enjoyed life when they were forty years older than I am. Forty years—forty times twelve months, think of that; why its an eternity to look forward to. To look back, to be sure, it does not seem so wondrous long, and yet if naturalists and plilosophers speak truth, we can never grow old. According to them, the *materiel* of our frame is undergoing perpetual changes; therefore ought we to be perpetually young. I no longer wonder, Fred, at those who grown gray, and old, and impotent; and who have furrowed the cheek of manhood with the deep wrinkles of premature age, in searching for the elixir which was to bestow perpetual youth. Where is the fortune that one would not sacrifice for it? Nay, where is the kingdom that one would not cheerfully resign for such a discovery?

"Travelling, and mixing perpetually with strangers, and making life a cosmorama of perpetually shifting scenes and persons; I never felt this approach to age, excepting, perhaps, in occasional '*defaillance*;' or when that devil, La Tour, with his cursed tweezers, would now and then twitch out a gray hair, and holding it up in the light as an apology for the pain he had given me, would inflict a more serious pang by its exhibition. But here, here, Fred, I am perpetually reminded of my approximation to that state of life we have so often ridiculed; to the fat justice, and the lean and slippered pantaloon, to the last of the seven ages, by the appearance of those around me. My housekeeper, whom I left a buxom widow of forty, is shrivelled up into wrinkles and gray hairs—a piece of parchment soaked and dried—not fit even for a lease of a year. Her daughter, who, on my departure, was a fine young woman of twenty—one whom even you and I might have looked upon, had we not been better engaged—is turned into a staid fat matron; looking precisely what her mother was when I left her; while my old porter, whom I left a hale and hearty fellow of fifty, is now a decrepid, asthmatic, gouty old driveller of seventy. If I walk abroad I read my own progress towards age in the lines of every face I meet, and I turn from them with the same disgust that a ci-devant beauty, who has just risen from the small-pox, would from her looking-glass.

"In short, Fred, during my absence, children have grown into men and women; young mothers have become grand-mothers, and all the world seems to have taken one gigantic stride towards the grave. The grave! and have I approached it too—have I, the gay, the frolicsome, the life of every thing, as you and our companions have called me, have I made the same stride towards this dark, this damned hole, in which all the pleasures of life are to be buried for ever; in which one's wild and excursive imagination, is to be cramped and crammed into a pit six feet by two. I will not think of it—I will not believe it. It may be made for the drivelling wretches around us; but for *you* and *I*, Fred, men of life and spirit, laughers at every thing serious, it cannot, shall not be; and yet Cæsar lies buried—but he was assassinated; and yet Anthony, who had basked in pleasure on the fair bosom of Cleopatra, did not the less lie in the cold, cold earth; but he, like a fool, contended with Pompey for a throne, and was slain; and we have seen our companions drop off one by one, and have followed some of them to this cursed cold receptacle of all that remained of what were once good fellows. These are damning facts! and I can scarcely believe that those we have laughed with and laughed at; those, who have been our companions in our follies; those whom we have seen flushed with the Tuscan grape in a roar of jollity, and following our lead with a spirit worthy of ourselves; I can scarcely believe, I say, that these are the tenants of a dark cold tomb. And then the women too—those whose clear complexion, sparkling eyes, delicious forms, we have admired—are they doomed to

Lie in cold obstruction, and to rot?

and to have their delicate skins defiled by the slime of those cursed reptiles which, they say, revel upon our bodies in this banqueting house for worms? Pshaw! I will not think about it.

"You ask, why did I venture to England?—*Venture!* Is it you who put that question to me? When was there any thing which pleased me, for which I did not *venture*? When was there any obstacle I did not overcome? However, to answer your plain question—I am come to England, first, because I was tired of the Continent. My mind seems to live, like a consumptive man, only on change; and have I not tried every change that the Continent could present? Have I not tried love, and what has it yielded? nothing but an endless series of the *same* pursuits and the *same* success. How I hate that word *same*. Did I not try war, and vainly imagined that I might find pleasure,—that commodity which to you and me seems épuisée,—in reviving the glory of ancient Greece; and what was I but the tool of a party, the prey of a bandit, the laughing stock of Europe? There I wrote and slaved for the pleasures of others. At any rate it is wiser to follow my old pursuits and labor for my own delight. Another reason for my return is, that I love to prove all prophecies excepting my own to be false, and every body here had prophesied that I should never return to England; and I longed also to prove to them that there was nothing I would not do. Besides there was no danger. The aristocracy, Fred, does not like to blazon any thing connected with its own immaculate body that does not raise it in the eyes of those whose inferiority gives them the privilege of their rank. Then, sir, there is this heir of mine, whom you know I met in Italy, and who shames me as much by the healthiness of his mind, as by the elasticity of his youth. I don't know how it is, but I have an insuperable aversion to a man, whom I see ready to slip into my saddle the moment I am compelled to quit it; and at my age, marriage is not quite out of the card; so Mr. Francis Hartley need not make himself too sure yet. That Italian girl, too, whom he evidently loves so ardently, and who, if I am any judge of the sex, and I have some right to imagine that I am a pretty competent one, loves him in return; but when I mention this girl, I con-

fess myself bewildered in my own feelings, never having been before interested about a woman, excepting on one account; I naturally enough placed the interest she inspired in me to the old score, attempted—and—shall I confess it—failed!—yes, failed! I envied Hartley the possession of her love; and when I learned that his passion only looked to honorable gratification, my family pride determined me to prevent the possibility of an unknown foreigner becoming the mother of the future Arlingtons. This is a prejudice I imbibed with my infancy, and it remains as strong as ever. She shall not, at any rate, be the wife of Hartley, unless I am the father of my own heir, and then, perhaps, I might glory in the mortification of the immaculate Lady Emily, and his philosophic father in such a union.

"Another and perhaps a more potent cause than all the rest is, that I have more dependence on my native air, and a greater reliance on English physicians, for the restitution of that health and strength, which, like cowards, seem retreating from the path in which I would still employ them. The foreign pharmacopœia seems too weak for an English constitution. There, Fred, thou hast now my whole list of reasons. I did not mean to give thee the last; but it poured out with the rest, like the lees at the bottom of a decanter; so be secret on that which I scarcely own to myself—but you have been so long a part of that self, that there seems an impulse to divulge every thing to you too strong for the power of my volition to resist.

"But I must prepare for my winter campaign. Dost remember how we dashed into the season formerly? Now, I must win my way; and to do it successfully, I have given orders for every thing that may make Arlington house attractive; and when were there entertainments without guests? or liberal hosts that had not good characters!

"Ever, yours,

"ARLINGTON."

"P. S. Do not forget my wishes to discover the real family of the Italian girl. I cannot account for my curiosity, but it exists, and that is enough to make me wish for its gratification, you have the clue; pursue it with your accustomed ingenuity, and I have no doubt you will ascertain all I wish to know."

CHAPTER XXXII.

RECAPITULATION.

A RETURN to the circles of London society, after only a few years' absence, does not present much novelty, or many changes. We find the pursuits still the same, the same round of apathetic pleasures, the same career of dissipation. A few more names added to the list of the ruined—an heiress has become the prey of a fortune hunter—or a young man of high birth and expectations has been inveigled into a match by some manœuvring mamma. A sportsman or two may have disappeared from the turf; hazard or ecarte may have driven one or two additional families to increase the circles of Boulogne, Tours, or Rouen; but their places are filled up by others, and the surface of society remains the same. It is thus that the world moves in the same careless round, presenting at every turn lessons of experience, by which nobody profits, and one unceasing history of the same occurrences.

The season had just commenced on Arlington's return, and it found our dramatis personæ much in the same state as when we last quitted them.

Lady Orville was still pursuing her deep schemes for the increase of her power, and for the gratification of her passions,—still following the same career of heartless intrigue; and lady Sophia only a little more impatient for that establishment which her mother had hitherto failed to procure. The return of Hartley had renewed the hopes they had formerly entertained, that he was destined to realize their expectations; and the improvement in his manners and person, which his three years' continental tour had produced, brought all the heart that Lady Sophia possessed into her wishes for the accomplishment of this union.

Lascelles had gone on in the same course, till his improvident bets, his bad luck at hazard, and his repeated applications to old Langley, had reduced his once splendid fortune to a mere pittance, in comparison with what it had been. As his losses continued, he solaced himself with the bottle, till his whole time was absorbed between the excitements of play and of wine, and he was very nearly degenerating into the mere gambler and the sot. Still his bets were sought eagerly at Tattersal's, and his company was anxiously looked for at hazard and ecarte, as he had never done any thing to forfeit his integrity, either on the turf or at the table. Plantations had vanished, and acre after acre had melted away to pay his debts of honor; and while there was a rood of ground or a stick of timber remaining, the leeches who had bled him so freely could not think of deserting their prey.

Langley was still in all the perplexity of Chancery, still living upon hope, and led on and on by his legal advisers, although every step that was taken seemed to place him farther from his object, and to involve him in greater uncertainties.

Our principal hero, for such we must now designate Hartley, quitted Hartley Grove, to which he had been recalled from the continent, for the purpose of entering into public life, and turning the energies of his nature to some account for the good of mankind, or for the advancement of his own fame.

Secret as he imagined his attachment for his fair Italian to have been, his family had been apprized of it by some anonymous hand, and the information was coupled with advice for his immediate recall, unless his father was prepared to see his name bestowed upon a foreigner, and the inheritors of his estate, the children of an obscure, if not of a profligate stranger. It was this anonymous appeal to the weakness of Mr. Hartley's character, that had produced the sudden recall, which, at the time, had surprised our hero at Naples. Upon a mere repetition of his story, which he confided generally to his father, and more particularly to Lady Emily, Hartley could

not but feel the justice of their apprehensions.—The family of Agnese, her earlier life, her future intentions, were equally unknown to him, and he dared not breathe his suspicions, which the style of her education had excited in his mind, that her protectors intended her for a public performer, that they might reap the benefit of those musical talents which are a certain fortune to the possessor, when they come stamped with the currency of Italian fame. Indeed, Agnese herself had half confessed this, and shuddered at the fears it excited in her sensitive mind. To breathe such a suspicion to his family would be only to add a more potent argument to those which his ignorance of her state and station already presented against the indulgence of his passion.

Yet with so much reason against its propriety, and with scarcely any hope, Hartley still secretly cherished his love for Agnese; her beauty, her accomplishments, the ideas that he had formed of the superiority of her character, had all made too deep an impression upon him to be easily erased; and although he could not advance any arguments to combat the rational ones of his father, he had yet an internal conviction that she was worthy of the love that she had inspired; and who was ever in love without the same idea of his mistress?"

Mr. Hartley and Lady Emily were grieved at the impediments which they saw this passion threw in the way of their son's marrying according to their desires; but they were satisfied with his promise never to form a connexion that should be displeasing to them. Lest our lady readers may throw more blame upon our hero for thus very *unheroically* resigning his heart to the influence of a second love, than he deserved, we must inform them that he had never ceased to regret the disappearance of Caroline, or to hope that time might produce the opportunity that he and his father desired to make her some reparation. The very nature of his love for Agnese, however, added to the consciousness of his guilt towards Caroline: for he now found that he had only felt for her the passing inclination of a moment, which her beauty had excited, and that he had indeed sacrificed her to a mere selfish feeling.

To Emily's mind the country and her old pursuits had soon restored its proper tone; she looked back blushingly upon the weakness by which she had been misled; but Forrester rose in her estimation by the contrast which his character formed with the light and frivolous beings by whom she had been deceived. The sterling ore of his solid acquirements created in her a contempt for the more showy accomplishments which had dazzled her. He was now, therefore, her accepted lover, and their marriage was determined to take place at the end of the next season, which it was resolved, on both their parts, should be again passed in London; that Emily might prove the truth of her own new formed opinions with relation to life, and as a kind of protection, which Forrester insisted upon as to the stability of those sentiments which she now avowed in his favor.

Lady Emily's London establishment had therefore been formed for the winter, and her parties were among those which gave the stamp and curreney of fashion to every body who partook of her entertainments. Lady Orville's arts had still so much power over Lady Emily, whose ears were deaf to tales of scandal, that she was quite insensible to her real character, and the Countess derived an additional power from her intimacy with such a person as Lady Emily Hartley.

Lord Arlington's sudden and unexpected appearance in London created little sensation, excepting in his own immediate connexions, and among those who knew the history of his marriage and its consequences. The length of time, however, which had passed, had mellowed the notoriety of these circumstances in many instances into indefinite recollections of youthful profligacy, and his changed appearance softened the indignation which might have been kept alive, had Arlington returned in the vigor of his manhood, instead of the victim of a premature old age.

He easily found two peers, therefore, of that party who wanted his proxy, to accompany him to the House when he took his oaths and his seat; and though men of his own standing, who could quite overcome the recollection of the enormity of his conduct with regard to a high-minded and greatly gifted woman, shrunk from his intimacy, he found enough among those who knew these circumstances only from tradition, who were glad to cultivate the friendship of the master of such magnificent establishments as those of Audley Square and Arlington Hall. The character of a man does not render his dinners less piquant, nor deprive his preserves of the sport they afford. His covers, both in town and the country, are equally attractive. Nor were there wanting dowagers with unmarried daughters, who, in spite of all, still sought for an alliance with a man, whose very name they ought not to have uttered in their daughters' presence. But Lord Arlington was now, undoubtedly, a widower; could as undoubtedly make his wife a countess; was not more than fifty; and what could any reasonable woman wish for more?

Lord Arlington knew the world too well not to be pretty certain that this would be the case, and he smiled with greater contempt than ever at those who sacrificed their pleasures to the prejudices of a society, which was so easily prevailed upon to abandon its ideas of propriety and virtue in favor of rank and wealth; and confirmed himself in the opinion that that could be of no consequence, the necessity for which could be obviated by such adventitious circumstances.

By Lady Orville and the Hartley family, the return of Lord Arlington was not looked upon with such indifference. In both of them it revived recollections too deeply rooted to be eradicated. Lady Emily thought of the beloved friend of her youth, and shuddered at the sight of him by whom she had been sacrificed. The countess remembered his triumph and desertion, and a more deadly hatred arose in her bosom, at the proximity of the man to whom she attributed all the circumstances of her future career of passion, and whom she considered as the spirit of evil which had influenced her life. The Hartleys, both out of respect to their family, and in the hope that age passed in respectability, might redeem, in some measure, the stain which his early excesses had cast upon a name and title to which they were the presumptive heirs,

would not be the only ones to exclude their relative from their house, or to perpetuate that stain by the continuance of their resentment.

It was, however, with great repugnance that Lady Emily first met Arlington; nor was it without shrinking, that he again saw the friend of the woman he had so deeply injured. She once asked if he knew of the fate of his child, and being answered in the negative, former circumstances were never recurred to, excepting the secret remembrance of Lady Emily, or in those moments of Lord Arlington, when remorse will force itself upon the reflections of the most hardened.

And now, having again placed our dramatis personæ on the London stage, we must to it "like French falconers," and finish our book.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A LIBERTINE.

"No man is a great man to his valet-de-chambre," is an old saying and a true one; and had La Tour told the mysteries of his master's dressing-room, and of his sleepless pillow, there are few who would have envied successes, the consequences of which were satiety and premature old age;—old age, too, without one of the comforts so necessary to make it palatable to the mind.

One of the mortifications which attended Lord Arlington's return among the companions of his earlier days, arose from the comparison he could not help drawing between himself and those who had led a different life. His cousin Hartley, for instance, though two or three years his senior, was still a young man; and in the robustness of his health stood by the side of Arlington's attenuated though elegant frame like an oak by the side of a reed. His eye was sparkling, and his cheek glowing with health; while those of Arlington spoke of internal weakness and decay. Of this difference he was painfully sensitive; for looking only to this life, no wonder that he watched with intense anxiety, and marked with infinite agony, every symptom that gave a warning of its close.

Our hero was surprised to find in Lord Arlington, his fellow-traveller, and the companion of his adventure in the neighborhood of Terracina; but this circumstance, as connecting him in some measure with the history of Agnese, gave him an interest in Hartley's mind which would otherwise have been wanting, and made the attentions which his relationship in some measure required, not so disagreeable as they would otherwise have been from his knowledge of Arlington's character.

Hartley little thought that to Arlington he was indebted for the anonymous information his father had received of the history of Agnese, as well as for the sudden disappearance of Agnese herself; neither was he aware of the almost hatred with which he viewed the man, who, according to all human probability, was to be the heir to his title and his fortunes. These feelings and circumstances were kept concealed in Lord Arlington's own breast, but they did not the less influence his conduct. His hatred, for it was little short of that feeling, for Hartley, was unaccountable to himself; but he had a natural antipathy to a man whom he judged to be waiting with impatience for the title and fortune which he was so unwilling to resign. He had likewise been deeply offended at the preference which the Italian girl had exhibited for Hartley over himself. There is nothing which cuts deeper into the heart of a man who has prided himself, all his life, on his success with the other sex, than the first symptoms of that preference which women give to younger men, and the painful knowledge this conveys of the decay of their power of pleasing, and of their influence. It was from Hartley that Lord Arlington had first learned this bitter lesson, and he had felt it too deeply to forget it. It was from Agnese that he had first suffered this mortification, and he determined to revenge it.

He knew too well, however, the consequences of being on terms with such a woman as Lady Emily, not to receive her son with kindness, and to attempt to cultivate his intimacy, though their natures were so essentially distinct from each other; for, in spite of all his errors, Hartley possessed a generous disposition, and was as incapable of cold-blooded seduction as Arlington was of a disinterested passion.

With Lord Orville it was different. In him Arlington found a kindred spirit of selfishness and libertinism, and seemed in his society to live again over the days of his youth; while Orville who knew much of his early history, looked upon Arlington as a model upon which a man of "bonnes fortunes" might form himself with advantage. The first meeting between Lady Orville and Lord Arlington had been avoided by the countess as long as manœuvring could keep them separate; moving, however, in the same cirle, this distance could not long be preserved. They at last met, and as a mutual glance showed at once the change in their persons, leaving barely sufficent for recognition, they shrunk from the contemplation; and each exclaimed internally, "Can this be the object which once fascinated my senses?"

A cold salute on the part of Arlington, whose feelings were always under control, and a haughty bow accompanied by a glance in which scorn was mingled with indignation, from the countess, was all that passed outwardly on the occasion. But the sight of him to whom she attributed all the miseries—all the degradation of her life, roused the demon in Lady Orvilles's breast; and now that he was again within her sphere, she determined to watch for some opportunity of revenge.

The marriage of his heir with her daughter she knew would mortify him, but though she now dedetermined to leave no scheme untried to accomplish this, she felt it would by no means satisfy her desires for vengeance. To do this was no easy matter, for a heart devoid of feeling shuts out so many possibilities of annoyance, that schemes adopted for this purpose are generally powerless. Lady Orville was, however, no common woman in any of her passions, and Lord Arlington little dreamed, in his contempt for her, of the power of the woman whose indignation was roused against him.

Lord Arlington's entertainments soon filled his

house, and as those who shuddered at his profligacy did not disdain to partake of his hospitality, the elegance of his manners, the brilliancy of his conversation, and consummate knowledge of mankind, soon obliterated many of the prejudices against him.

Men, too, of his rank and fortune, can always command a sufficient number of parasites around his table to make him pleased with himself; and this is one great step towards being pleased with the world.

Neither his rank nor fortune, nor all the flatteries which they commanded, however, could hide from Lord Arlington the mortifying reflection that he was no longer a young man; and that still more mortifying certainty that he was no longer considered so by that sex to whom his life had been devoted.

His rank commanded attention, but he felt that it was paid to his rank and not his person. Deaf ears were turned to his compliments—his attentions treated rather as parental than amatory, and every thing tended to prove that his day was gone by.

In spite of all these indications, however, Lord Arlington would not acknowledge himself growing old, or glide into those habits which might still have preserved his constitution from greater dilapidation. He still lived with young men, and still prided himself upon living as they did. He drank with them, jested with them, and intrigued with them at fifty, in the same manner as he would have done at five-and-twenty; nor perceived that he was as often their jest as their companion; nor would he have been more pleased with the praise that "old Arlington was a prime fellow of his age!"

Although Arlington was reduced principally to the vain boast of former successes to keep up his present character, the similarity of his pursuits with those of Orville soon rendered them great allies; an alliance which was serviceable in more ways than one, to a man so dissipated and extravagant as Lord Orville, and whose violent passions often hurried him into excesses from the effects of which he sometimes found extrication difficult.

Arlington's life became, therefore, apparently a life of pleasure. He had his boxes at the opera and the theatres, his clubs and his mistresses; though his heart was so blazé that scarcely any pursuit could create a sensation in the stagnant pool of his exhausted passions, or bear any stamp of novelty to give them a momentary chance of engaging any thing more than that attention which mere habit had given him in an intrigue.

Such was Lord Arlington, and such is almost every professed libertine, after they have lived through the hey-day of those youthful passions which may prove an apology in the early days of life, but which render its maturity contemptible.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A DEBUTANTE

We forget what monarch it was who offered a reward for a new sensation, and we have not time to look out for his name for the information of our readers; but we can easily enter into his feelings. Well—the world of fashion was precisely in the predicament of this monarch. All was apathy and sameness: there were no particular lions to give animation to parties; no foreign constellation at the opera or concerts; and what was still more extraordinary, no egregious folly or profligate *faux-pas*, to excite a nine-days' wonder, and give an impetus to scandal and conversation.

The subscribers gaped over the opera, and young ladies languished through the quadrilles at Almack's. The gallopade and the mazurka had not then given them the excitement of learning a new dance, and all was in a state of apathetic stagnation.

At this period, the despatches which our noble minister at —— found it necessary to send to the government, on the subject of his diplomatic mission, were accompanied by an account of a new vocal debutante, who had astonished the first circles, and excited the wonder of the musical world in Italy. "Il gran Maestro" had pronounced her to be perfect; and she had sang with such success at some of the concerts, that the name of Bernardini bid fair to be celebrated with those of Pasta and Catalini throughout Europe.

From the moment that this information of a new star in the musical hemisphere was bruited abroad, the cry that "We must have her here!" was set up: and the poor manager of the King's Theatre was pestered to death about "la belle Bernardini." Old subscribers threatened to withdraw their subscriptions, if he did not—and new ones offered themselves if he did—engage this new syren; till at length out of the fatigue of resistance, he gave way, and his secretary for foreign affairs was despatched to Italy, on a mission which had for its object the visit of the fair debutante to this country on any terms. The poor manager knew he should be ruined, but then he was ruined by obliging the Duke of B———, the Earl of C———, the Countess of D———, and half a hundred other titled persons; and who would not be honored by being ruined in such a cause!

The anticipation of her arrival excited a sensation. A hundred anecdotes were invented with respect to her past life and future expectations; some declared her the affianced bride of a prince; another whispered her to be the scion of one of the noblest families in Europe; a third declared her to be the most accomplished singer under the sun. But all the ingenuity and malice of scandal had, as yet, invented nothing that could tarnish her bright name as a woman. Such a rara avis was, of course, expected with anxiety by that world of fashion who live only by a round of novelty and amusement.

At length, la belle cantatrice arrived, and was scarcely unfurled from the flannels in which her chaperone had enveloped her, to guard her against the inclemencies of an English spring, than a hundred cards were left at her door. It had been stipulated by the manager's secretary, that she should sing nowhere but at the opera, and that her first appearance should be upon the stage. The enormous terms which her protectors had demanded and obtained, made it but reasonable that the manager should have her

all to himself, and possess all the chances she gave him of success. But what were these considerations in comparison with the eclat which her "*very first*" appearance would give to a private party? A small one consisting of the most eminent amateurs of the day, together with about five hundred other friends, was, therefore, speedily got up; and the Countess of ———, by liberality and persuasion, prevailed upon her protectors to permit their protegee to sing at ——— House, in spite of their engagements to the contrary. There she realized all that had been anticipated; and the manager would have had no reason to repent this infringement upon his treaty, from the celebrity that it gained for his prima donna, from the account both of her beauty and singing which went forth from this party, but that she caught a severe cold from going out too early after her arrival, which deferred her appearance three or four opera nights, during which her enormous salary was rigorously exacted by those who had the management of her talents.

Night after night every box was taken in expectation of her debut; and night after night were the manager's expectations of a great receipt disappointed, by the necessity which still existed for that unfortunate line in his bill of fare, "In consequence of the continued indisposition," &c.

At length, however, the cold was better and her appearance was determined upon. All the world were on the alert. Dinners were ordered in time to permit an early attendance, or deferred altogether till after the performance. Every box was filled; the pit crammed to suffocation; Fops' alley literally wedged with men; and even the capacious gallery full to its top rows, where might be seen two or three of those liveries which always designate the presence of some royal personage.

Lord Arlington, whose senses were too usé to feel curiosity of any description, had entered mechanically into the pursuit of the moment, had talked with others of expectations he did not feel, and of anxieties he did not experience. He, however, came with the rest of the crowd early enough to welcome the debutante on her first appearance. Hartley, not finding room in his mother's box, had entered Lord Arlington's; and they were amusing themselves by observing the inconvenience of a crowded pit, and the many struggles which were made among the polite for places to see the great attractions of the night. The overture and first act of the opera were unattended to, or scarcely heard, amid the general conversation which takes place at the Opera when no star is on the stage.

At length, the bell announced the rising of the curtain for the second act. The buzz was instantly hushed into the most profound silence; so still, indeed, was the house, that the old saying, that "you might have heard a pin drop," seemed to be realized. A slight bustle behind the scenes, a sensation in the coulises, heard rather than seen, announced the approach of the new singer; another moment saw her in the front of the stage, standing timidly, and almost fainting before such an audience as she had never yet witnessed, and vainly attempting that obeisance with which debutantes generally acknowledge the tumultuous encouragement with which they are received. The instant of her appearance, handkerchiefs waved, and fans were beaten against kid gloves and opera-glasses, in the boxes; the pit was too full to permit any great use of hands, but opera-glasses and feet were put into requisition on the occasion; while the gallery was almost as tumultuous as that of an English theatre on the same good-natured occasion.

Overcome by her excessive agitation, she would have sunk on the stage, had not the manager, perceiving her situation, come from the wing and supported her. As he raised her from the almost recumbent position into which her agitation had thrown her, her long luxuriant locks were thrown back, and discovered features so resplendent with beauty, that another loud burst of applause followed the first discovery of the extent of her personal charms. The moment her features were displayed to the public, Arlington and Hartley both started and exclaimed at the same instant, "C'est l'Agnese!" And it was indeed the fair incognita of Terracina who had excited so much curiosity in Arlington and so much interest in the bosom of Hartley.

Arlington's emotion subsided in an instant, but it was some minutes before Hartley could recover the effect which her sudden appearance had created He saw in her debut as a public performer the annihilation of those hopes which, in spite of his better reason, he had still cherished, that time might clear up the mystery with regard to Agnese, in such a manner as might not prelude entirely the idea he had entertained of making her his wife Here, however, was an end of these hopes; for Hartley's was not a family that was ever likely to consent to receive a public performer among its members, however correct her morals and conduct, or however unblemished her private character Such is the prejudice which even liberal people are sufficiently unjust to entertain with regard to those who, surrounded as they are by temptations, require still greater encouragement to continue in the right path, and deserve much more commendation for virtuous conduct, than if their lot had been cast in the every-day career of common-place existence.

Arlington saw what was passing in Hartley's mind, and felt a species of pleasure in the contemplation. He had long delighted in contemning every idea of virtue, and he saw that Hartley could not help considering her appearance on the stage as the first step towards that moral degradation which, in Italy, he had attempted to affix to the character of every woman receiving such an education as that of Agnese. As the performance proceeded, Hartley sickened at the applause, and shrunk from the effect of those efforts, the success of which would confirm her continuance in the profession she had adopted, and annihilate his hopes forever. Even now, should her debut be succeeded by her immediate retirement, he feared the obstacle which even one appearance would create to his wishes would be insurmountable.

Arlington saw in the changing countenance of his young companion the depth and the sincerity of his passion, and his own family pride was roused at the thought that these feelings might be strong enough to make the obscure adventuress the future Lady Arlington, and the mother of children who would inherit estates, till now ever under the control of the scions of legitimate aristocracy.

He knew Hartley was not deficient in pride; but it was the pride of virtue—the pride of honor—more than that of rank; and he felt that his only chance of curing Hartley of his love was to reduce the character of its object.

He began, therefore, at once upon this principle, by hinting his congratulations to Hartley on Agnese having taken a step which must tend to facilitate his wishes; for he had always made a point of conversing on this subject as though Hartley had the intention of making her his mistress, instead of his wife. Hartley felt all these observations severely, because he knew that Lord Arlington was only now stating those sentiments which would be entertained by so many. He had not, however, courage at this moment to combat them, and he, by this time, knew Lord Arlington's principles, or rather his want of them, with regard to women, too well to attempt to subvert his opinions. He listened therefore in silence, and sat through a performance, which was crowned with the most brilliant success, in spite of the timidity with which it was so evidently accompanied, in agony. His first impulse had been to quit the theatre the moment after his recognition of Agnese, but his position with regard to Lord Arlington was such as made him wish to conceal the extent of that influence which she possessed over his feelings. He felt that it was but natural that Lord Arlington should in some measure partake of the sentiments which family pride had inspired in his father; and he had latterly had his suspicions, that his sudden recall to England had originated in some communication between them.

On the fall of the curtain the cry was long and general for the appearance of the heroine of the evening; and Hartley had the additional agony of seeing her led forward by the manager to face the gaze of the thousands who were applauding her to the skies. The moment she had retired, numbers hurried to the stage to pay their respects to the fair debutante. Hartley was led thither by Arlington, who knew the scene he would there witness, and who truly prognosticated its effect; for Hartley sickened to see the woman he loved surrounded by all that was so much calculated to turn a woman's head, and oppressed by the compliments and congratulations of some of the most profligate men in town, who consider it their privilege to annoy those whom they imagine their applause supports. Among these, the most prominent was Lord Orville; and Hartley knowing his character, and dreading his influence, turned from the scene with disgust, and, in spite of Arlington, quitted the stage without speaking to Agnese.

In spite of the fatigue and agitation by which she was oppressed, almost to fainting, she was compelled to listen to all the dull compliments and extravagant eulogiums which were poured upon her from all quarters. They seemed, however, to fall powerless upon her ear, and drew from her only cold replies of common-place politeness. Her eye seemed to wonder amid the crowd, as though it searched for somebody who was not there. As Lord Arlington approached her, a heightened color and increased agitation expressed her recognition, though the expression of her countenance was any thing but that of pleasure, and she seemed to cling the closer to the arm of her champerone.

He addressed her in that tone of half familiarity and respect, which, while it conveys to the person addressed nothing with which she can be offended, at the same time expresses to the bystanders that there is more between them that meets the ear. How many of the reports with regard to women owe their origin to nothing but this profligate coxcombry by which puppies would convey hints of familiarities which never existed! This is too much the case in general society: but it is a practice as common as it is contemptible among the loungers of a green-room and the frequenters of the "coulisses and foyer" at the Opera, who seem to think themselves privileged to talk with those who cannot escape from their conversation, with the same air of familiarity that they would talk with their mistresses.

From a man of Lord Arlington's character this would have a double effect; and his late return from the continent, and the evident air of recognition with which he was received, not unmixed with embarrassment, gave a color to surmises, in which Arlington himself was contemptible enough to find a pleasure. The substance of his delights had fled from his senseless grasp, but he could derive a pleasure from the shadow of them, and prided himself upon a reputation that a man of feeling and honor would have shrunk from.

The fair debutante at length escaped from her persecutors, and retired with her protectors, who were the same couple with whom Lord Arlington had seen her in Italy, and who appeared not a little surprised and pleased at recognising him in England, and at the consideration with which he was evidently treated, as well as at the title by which he was addressed.

While Agnese shrunk from the applause and attentions which she received, and listened with disgust to the fulsome compliments which were paid her, these people exchanged glances of triumphant success, and seemed rejoiced at the accomplishment of some long-cherished scheme.

They therefore not only received but encouraged the attentions paid to their protegee, and did not seem over scrupulous as to the motives by which they were instigated.

CHAPTER XXXV.

A PRIMA DONNA.

Almost from the earliest period of her recollection, Agnese had been under the protection of the couple who had superintended her education, and had now forced her upon the stage. A faint idea, however, of a chamber of death, and of a pale and aged man kissing and confiding her to the care of some other person, lingered dimly in her remembrance; but it was more like one of the dreams of her infancy than reality: and what was extraordinary, this remembrance was always much more vivid in her dreams that in her waking thoughts. If, however, it ever had any other foundation than in her dreams, time had now nearly obliterated all traces

of this early scene from her mind; and all her infant associations were so wholly connected with the people with whom she had lived from the age of five or six, that she never looked beyond them, or thought of having been connected with any other beings than those who represented that she was the mere object of their charity, left under their care by a foreigner, who had promised to reclaim her, but had never performed that promise.

This however, was not the fact; for the Englishman by whom she had been placed under their superintendence had left with them an ample sum of money for all the expenses of a common education, and had bargained with them for the protection of the child forever. This circumstance they never confided to her; but appropriating the money to their own purposes, and representing themselves as her benefactors, they drew upon her gratitude for that affection and devotion to which they were not entitled by nature, but which her affectionate heart and disposition were too happy to pay where she owned an obligation. Indeed, Agnese was a child who could not exist without loving; she possessed a heart overflowing with tenderness, and thought no exertion too great to show her attachment to those from whom she received a kindness.

The Signor Bononi, to whose care she was confided, was one of those professors of music with which Italy abounds, whose talent had only made him the Apollo of an obscure village. By his misappropriation of the money left for the education of Agnese, it may be seen how little principle he possessed; and he was already beginning to think the child a burden, when her uncommon and precocious talent for the art of which he was professor, excited his cupidity, and inspired him with the idea that he might ultimately realize much more than would repay all the cares and costs of the child's education: while the increasing beauty of Agnese gave him hopes that her charms might ultimately be turned to his advantage. These views, and the astonishing improvement of the child, even under the little tuition which he was enabled himself to give her, soon reconciled Bononi and his wife to their infant charge.

With such a disposition as Agnese possessed, it was no wonder that her protectors obtained that unbounded influence over her mind and actions which they possessed; and conscious of the necessity for this influence to further their schemes, they had omitted no opportunity to increase and confirm it.

The professor had just enough judgment to appreciate the astonishing powers displayed by his pupil, and to know that she deserved a better preceptor than himself. With this view he removed from his village to Milan; and by dint of perseverance, and the exhibition of the child's talent, he obtained her admission as a pupil into a conservatorio, where she enjoyed the advantage of some of the best masters in Italy.

So precocious were the powers of Agnese at this early period, that she played before some of the first people and the finest judges in Europe; and Bononi and his wife began already to reap the benefit of her exertions.

Her enthusiasm in the pursuit aided the instructions she received; and, while a child, Agnese was the phenomena of the musical world in the circles which she frequented. Her protectors, however, had heard of the immense sums accumulated by singers in different parts of Europe; and the view of educating Agnese for a prima donna, when time should have added the charms of womanhood to those of her musical talent, made them withdraw her from these infant exhibitions; and her exertions, together with the presents which had been made her, having already realized enough to procure instruction, and to support them for some few years, Bononi withdrew his charge from public life, and pursued his system of improvement.

During this period, fortunately for Agnese, she attracted the attention and gained the affection of a sister of a convent of Rome, where she practised the organ, and from whom her mind and heart derived great advantage. From the lips of Sister Theresa she imbibed principles of rectitude and religion, which, while they made her revolt from the life for which she was intended, inspired her with strength to resist its temptations, and firmness to regulate her conduct through its ordeal.

The talent and beauty of Agnese at length exceeded Bononi's most sanguine expectations, and he determined to produce her to the musical world. This determination was accelerated by the fears which he began to entertain of the influence of Sister Theresa, and by his dread that one so young and lovely might attract attention, or form some attachment calculated to militate against the plan he had formed of realizing a large fortune by her exertions, before she procured any establishment for herself.

With this feeling he had always discouraged the attentions and kindness which many had been inclined to show to Agnese, and it was the same selfishness that created the coldness with which his thanks to Hartley for her preservation were accompanied.

The temptations held out by Lord Arlington were almost sufficient to gratify his cupidity; as they, however, still fell short of what he thought might be produced by her talents, he determined not to swerve from his original plan; but by taking the information which Arlington had given, and adopting his fears of her attachment to Hartley, he had removed her suddenly and secretly out of the reach of both their pursuits at once.

Bononi managed matters so well, as to create such a sensation by the first appearance of Agnese, which took place in Florence, that she at once rose to the top of her profession; and the name of la Bernardini, or l'Agnese, was soon bruited through the capitals of Europe, as a novel attraction in the musical hemisphere.

England was, however, Bononi's first object. He knew what sums were lavished upon foreign singers in this country; and he knew likewise the empressement with which a new voice and a new person are followed by fashionable people from all sorts of motives; and he set down London as the hot-bed for the follies and fashions, from which he was to realize his anticipations of fortune.

In Florence he found plenty of Englishmen of rank, too willing to become patrons of such a debutante, and to write praises of this new constellation to the manager of the opera in London. Several brought over accounts of her talents; in

short, every ruse was resorted to by Bononi to procure such an engagement as would satisfy even his cupidity.

Every stipulation having been made by this musical diplomatist, and agreed to on the part of the English directeur; and everything signed, sealed, and secured, with as much formality as a treaty of alliance between two states, Agnese at length came to London, where her debut realized the most sanguine expectations of "her friends and the public," and delighted every body but the poor manager, who was compelled to be congratulated on crowded houses for which he got nothing; and upon a triumphant success which put money only into the pocket of Signor Bononi. From the moment of the appearance of Agnese, her protectors became persons of consequence, not only in their own eyes, but in those of the admirers of their protegee. Letters for engagements poured from all quarters—notes, enclosing drafts, for her to sing at private concerts, arrived daily; and the hall-table of the new prima donna was covered with the visiting-tickets of the first people in the land: while presents were made, on all sides, to Bononi and his wife, who began seriously to think of following the example of some of their predecessors, and adopting the travelling title of Baron and la Baronne, to which they would have had quite as much right as many who have been received into society here, under titles to which they had no other pretension than their own impudence.

Those only who know the fact can imagine the airs which are assumed by people of this stamp, or the insolence with which many of our noblesse and gentry have been treated by them; and few can imagine the parade with which they conduct themselves in the engagements which they form for their protegee. In most instances, this is the mere conduct of those intrusted with her affairs, and does not arise from the singer herself; and this was the case with Agnese. She was completely under the guidance of Bononi and his wife, and passed her time in the cultivation of her talent, or in silent thoughts of the young Englishman who had deserved her gratitude by the protection he had afforded her, and excited the first feelings of love her young heart had ever experienced by his subsequent attentions; and she wondered, among all the persons who presented themselves, that she had never yet seen Hartley.

Her conduct in public was characterized by its modesty, and in private by its excellence; while she seemed nearly insensible to the admiration she excited; and at least presumed upon it so little, that half the world disbelieved the stories which were propagated of the consequence she assumed in her professional arrangements, all of which were entirely attributable to the vanity and folly of Banoni and his wife, who were making the best market of her talents for their own emolument. Of these circumstances Agnese knew nothing; she felt herself bound by every tie of gratitude to devote herself to those to whom she considered she owed every thing and by their directions she was completely guided.

There are a certain set of men about town, possessing a certain rank in fashionable circles, either from birth or fortune, who think it their privilege to make what they call "love" to every new debutante in the theatrical world. With no other feeling than the eclat of the thing, these men pester the new singers and dancers with their attentions, and frequently insult them by their propositions. The appearance of such a woman as Agnese could not fail to excite all the energies of this swarm of coxcombs, by whom she was immediately assailed by all means, and all directions. Persecuted by them in the coulisses of the opera, and in the retiring apartments of the concert rooms, she became disgusted; and at length positively refused to see them at her own house, to which several of them had gained admittance by presents to Bononi and his wife.

In most, if not all of these, eclat and notoriety were the only excitements to their attentions; but among them, one had conceived so violent a passion for her, that no sacrifice seemed too great for the accomplishment of his object: and this was Lord Orville. Struck by her beauty and talents on her debut, he was still more fascinated by her manners and conversation. Presented by Arlington, Bononi and his wife could not but receive him graciously, and he availed himself of their avarice to enjoy as much of her society as they could procure him.

Many of these butterflies, when they found the uselessness of their attentions, and discovered the little progress they made, dropped off one by one abusing her for the coldness of her character; or, still more basely, indulging in inuendoes which would have left their success doubtful, had they been uttered by any other lips than their own They all, however, affected an intimacy with her in public.

It was not, however, thus with Lord Orville; the more he saw of her, the more his love increased; opposition seemed only to swell the tide of his passion; till, in a short time, the accomplishment of his object engrossed all his time, and Agnese was literally persecuted by his attentions.

Surprised at the coldness with which he was received, and the indifference with which his rank, and those privileges upon which he built his hopes, were considered, he at length made a confidant of Lord Arlington, from whom he learned the solution of the enigma, in a detail of that nobleman's suspicion of her love for Hartley. This was only to add another motive for the perseverance of Orville, who gloried as much in thwarting the wishes of, and in triumphing over another, as he did in the gratification of his own. He now, therefore, devoted himself to the accomplishment of his object. Bononi and his wife were propitiated by magnificent presents; for they had no objection to sell opportunities which they knew, from the temper of Agnese, were profitless; and they pocketed the bribes, while they laughed at their dupe.

Orville, however, was not a man to be easily foiled; his whole stock of passion had been excited by Agnese, and there was no attempt, however desperate, of which he was not capable, to aid the attainment of his wishes.

In this passion of Lord Orville, Arlington saw the means of gratifying his hatred for Hartley, and his anger against Agnese; and, at the same time, the surest method of preventing that union at which his family pride revolted.

He saw, too, in Orville, a temper and a disposition so like his own, that his vanity prognosticated complete success, and he determined to assist him, to the utmost of his ability, to get Agnese into his power, either through attachment, or by some means even less justifiable.

The similarity of character which existed between them, had attached Arlington more to the society of Orville than that of any other person, and that kind of friendship grew up between them which led to a mutual confidenoe in their unworthy pursuits, which were, however, with them, matters of triumph instead of subjects of shame.

These two worthies, therefore, determined upon the ruin of Agnese; the one to gratify what he deemed to be an irresistible passion; and the other to indulge a congregation of mixed feeling—of hatred, of mortification, and anger, for which he could not himself account.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

PLANS.

Whether the passion of love produces, in the aggregate, most pleasure or most pain, it would be very difficult to determine. That the most successful passion, even where "the course of true love runs smooth," creates pain, there is no doubt; for the human heart is so wayward in its fancies, that where there are no real evils, it will create fictitious ones; a thousand groundless fears imbitter the brightest hopes, and foundless jealousies deprive success of half its gratification. But of all the pains of which love is the occasion, perhaps that produced by the idea of its object being engaged in unworthy pursuits is the greatest. And this pang was felt in the utmost degree by Hartley; for he was unjust enough to imbibe in some degree the prejudices of the world against the stage, and to consider strict correctness of conduct almost incompatible with its pursuits.

How must the delicacy of love suffer at the idea of its object being nightly exposed to the criticism and gaze of the million, and to all the enuendoes and reports to which the most correct public life will give occasion! How severely must it feel the temptations to which such a life must necessarily expose its object, and shrink from the exertion of those privileges which it is the fashion for coxcombs to assume in their intercourse with public performers!

Hartley felt all this: he knew what he had done himself in the first season of his folly; and he had seen and recollected but too vividly, how much more other young men had done at the same time. He was sensible how open to insult the position of Agnese placed her, and yet felt himself so circumstanced, that he dared offer neither protection nor advice.

Indeed, he felt the eyes of Arlington and his family to be upon him; and he dreaded the ridicule of the one almost as much as he feared giving pain to the other.

Under these circumstances, he had forborne to seek any more than one interview with Agnese; and though every opera night was a night of agony to him, from the knowledge he possessed, that she was not only exposed to the public gaze, but submitted to the attention of every libertine about town behind the scenes, yet he never ventured within the walls of the theatre.

In the only interview with which he had indulged himself, he had fairly and plainly stated the circumstances and prejudices of his family; the barrier which her public life had raised to their union; and could only deplore the excess of his love, and the despair he himself entertained of the accomplishment of his wishes. The repugnance of Agnese to her profession was quite equal to his own; but she was supported in her pursuit by the knowledge that she was performing a duty to her early benefactors; and though she loved as firmly and disinterestedly as Hartley himself, and deplored as much as he did the obstacles to their union, yet she betrayed sufficient pride to make him perceive that she would never entertain a thought of entering any family, where she was not to be received with the most perfect welcome.

Comparing the conduct of Hartley with that of others who had sought, by their attention, to win her favor, he could not but rise in her estimation by the contrast; and the result of this interview was only to increase their esteem for each other, and their mutual regret at the necessity for their separation.

Had Hartley sought for any future interviews, he could not have obtained them; for Arlington had so wrought upon Bononi and his wife, that they had determined to exclude him as much as possible from all private intercourse with their protegee.

Love is of all passions the most difficult to submit to the circumstances by which it is surrounded; and thus, though both Hartley and Agnese felt that it would be for the happiness of each other to conquer their mutual passion, they found this to be impossible, and still resigned themselves to its influence.

Much as Hartley felt at the assiduities to which he knew that Agnese must be subject, he would have experienced much more agony, had he been aware of the passions and plots of Lord Orville, and of the assistance rendered to him by Lord Arlington. His feelings, however, were sufficiently strong to deprive life of any pleasure, and to unfit him for all the business into which he was entering. His family saw this; and while they admired his conduct under the peculiar circumstances in which he was placed, they still trembled for his resolution, and persuaded him to quit London, and again try the effects of absence.

In the mean time Lady Orville, amazed at the little effect of her own manœuvres and Lady Sophia's charms, on the obdurate heart of her friend's son, began to give little hints to Lady Emily of Lady Sophia's passion for Hartley, and of the inroads it was making on her health and happiness. She knew this was the most effectual way of working upon Lady Emily to aid her in her plans. That lady, however, in the sincerity of her sorrow for what she deemed a hopeless passion, disclosed, in confidence, the unhappy attachment of Hartley for

the fair debutante, and detailed the whole of the little romance, which had led to their first knowledge of each other.

Perceiving, as she thought, in this passion, the only obstacle to the accomplishment of her own and her daughter's wishes, she determined to use her utmost endeavors to remove it; and judging of the virtue of Agnese by that of others in the same situation, and perhaps by that of herself, she had no doubt but that the temptations by which she was surrounded would soon prevent the possibility of such a union as she dreaded; for she had too thorough a knowledge of the little care which either of her own children had for her wishes, to imagine that Lady Emily's son would in reality sacrifice a predominant passion out of filial affection or respect for his family. Lest, however, the temptations on which she depended should not prove sufficiently strong, she began to have recourse to detraction, to degrade the character of Agnese in the estimation of the world, knowing that the reputation of vice is sometimes more potent in its effect than vice itself.

Remembering Lord Arlington's family pride, she even condescended to add his influence to the success of her attempts, by artfully describing her own and Lady Emily's fears that Hartley might at length think seriously of such a union. Lord Arlington's and Lady Orville's were kindred minds; and though they despised each other, they had no objection to an alliance which had the same object in view; and Lord Arlington having too little respect for the countess, to be delicate in the species of the confidence he had placed in her, actually quieted her fears by detailing a scheme on the part of a young nobleman, the success of which would completely prevent the catastrophe, which he acknowledged he dreaded quite as much as the Hartley family themselves.

Lady Orville was of course, cautious to hide her own object fron Arlington's knowledge, while he was quite as cautious in concealing that it was her own son whose passion he had promised to assist. Thus mutually deceiving eaeh other in their separate objects, they both joined to effect the same dishonorable end. In the meantime Orville's passion was daily increasing, till at length he seemed to live only on his hopes of success, which he was determined to accomplish at all events. Conscious, however, that while her bosom was inclined in Hartley's favor, any abrupt declaration of his passion would have an effect contrary to that which he desired, and tend before he had attained any influence, only to put her on her guard, he contented himself with those perpetual though silent attentions, which win their way so much with a woman of delicate feelings, and by keeping away every other competitor for her favor; while he replied to the bandinage of his friends in such a manner as to confirm the suspicions at which they only hinted.

The presents made to Bononi by Lord Orville were quite enough to enlist him and his wife into his favor, and they facilitated as much as lay in their power his interviews with Agnese. Bononi had no objections to sell opportunities by which he knew nobody could profit; while he pocketed the bribes which were offered him, and laughed in his sleeve at the dupes who were deceived by him.

All this, however, contributed to lower the name of Agnese in public estimation; and Hartley was condemned to the agony of seeing paragraphs hinting at liaisons which never existed, and detailing circumstances which never occurred. For such is the glorious liberty of the press in this country, that no reputation is safe from its effects, while defence is as perilous as the attack.

Orville and Arlington managed all this: they considered every thing that occurred as engines operating to facilitate their schemes. Lady Orville also rejoiced in every thing that contributed to diminish the character of her whom she could not but consider as her daughter's rival; as the less she was held in public estimation, the more was the remote chance decreased that the Hartley family would ever sanction their son's attachment.

Thus was Agnese made the innocent victim of detraction, her name becoming sullied by the venality of her protectors, and her reputation attacked at the very moment that her life was perfectly exemplary.

Hartley heard and saw all this, without the power of ascertaining the truth or remedying the evil; and Agnese herself was, of course, insensible to the existence of the scandal, and conscious of her own innocence, never dreamed of the detraction of which she was the subject.

Lover after lover was dismissed or tired out by her apparent insensibility, while she pursued her career, rising in her professional attraction, and her protectors increasing in the enormous profits they derived from her labors: profits that soon determined Bononi and his wife to prevent her marriage with any one, and that made them regret the ostentatious charity which had induced them to divulge that she was not their own child.

Her ideas of gratitude were, however, sufficiently powerful to make her obedience to their wishes quite as great as though she had really been their daughter; and the only relief she experienced amid the pain of pursuit, in her success, was the pleasure she had in contributing to their independence.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

A VIRTUOUS ACTRESS.

THERE is scarcely any thing more difficult than for a beautiful woman to find a friend. Her attractions are too powerful to confine the feelings of the one sex within those bounds prescribed by disinterested friendship; and those of the other are too much under the influence of envy to permit them to view the beauty of another without the sensations of a rival. Personal attraction, under all circumstances, has always too much influence on our passions to permit the free exercise of an unbiased judgment. In this position was Agnese; surrounded by admirers, she had none she could call friend. Her protectors themselves were so much absorbed by their avarice, that all they thought of was making the most of her talents; and perceiving the more she was the fashion the

easier their object was accomplished, they encouraged all the attentions paid to her, and seemed careless as to the intentions or principles of the many who sought her favor, or of the notoriety which such attentions were calculated to produce.

They had found that, in England, the talent which could ensure amusement would always command success, independently of character; and, indeed, had even heard of instances where its very loss had produced the desired result, and where an infamous notoriety had done the work of genius, and thrown its possessor into celebrity and fortune.

Those persons of her own sex who patronized Agnese, thought of her only as her presence at their parties gratified their vanity; they never considered her as a young and inexperienced woman, thrown into a perilous situation in a strange country, to whom advice might be useful, and whom they might, by a little kindness, preserve from that which had been the fate of so many in her situation.

There was, however, one who interested herself greatly in the fate and conduct of Agnese, although she had never invited her to her parties, or admitted her to her house—and this was Lady Emily Hartley. Loving her son as she did, she could not be indifferent to her who had so far influenced his fate as to create an attachment which it would at any rate, take much time to eradicate; and she resolved to watch the course of Agnese in the perilous path into which her pursuits had thrown her; first, on account and through fears that she naturally had of her influence over her son; and subsequently, from the interest which her exemplary conduct, in such a position inspired.

She saw Agnese surrounded by flatterers, without giving way to vanity; by lovers. without the possibility of a stigma being cast upon her reputation; and preserving all the artless modesty of nature, amid an enthusiasm of admiration that would have intoxicated any woman possessed only of a common mind.

The manner in which she had repressed attentions which she deemed it dishonorable to encourage, had procured for her the respect of the very persons who had paid them so unsuccessfully; and though her fair fame could not escape the attacks with which of late years, editors have thought it necessary to season the columns of their papers, those who knew the conduct and life of Agnese, were sensible of the falsehood of those attacks.

What Lady Emily heard of her in society was confirmed by the information Mr. Hartley gleaned among the men at the clubs, where it is pretty well known that all the *aventures du jour* are as thoroughly canvassed by a set of idle loungers, as they ever were over the tea-table of any of those scandal-loving spinsters, who allow immaculate characters to none but their parrots and their cats.

Although the accounts which they received from all quarters, thus interested Mr. and Lady Emily Hartley in favor of Agnese, the merit of its object increased their anxiety about the attachment of their son, and made them almost involuntarily keep a closer watch upon his actions.

But for this there was no occasion; Hartley loved Agnese with too true an affection to run the risk of introducing her into his family without their entire approbation; he loved her too well to hazard her subjection to the slightest humiliation; while she had too just a sense of propriety to encourage or permit the visits of one who, she felt, had such a firm possession of her heart. Indeed, her attachment to Hartley was so strong that, independently of the correctness of her principle, it would have been sufficient to have preserved her from temptations to which her situation exposed her.

With such an attachment, and with a mind and heart so constituted, it may be easily imagined that the attentions of Lord Orville, insidious as they were produced but little effect. Used to conquest in quarters where public opinion placed a far higher standard of virtue than it allows to an actress, he was surprised and mortified at the little progress he made, and many were the consultations held between himself and Arlington as to the best method of reducing this hitherto impregnable fortress.

In this pursuit it is easy to find a motive for the perseverance of Lord Orville, whose violent passions were so much engaged in the attainment of his object; but it is very difficult to understand the almost demoniac determination with which Arlington aided him in all his schemes. With Orville there was the hope of gratification, the anticipation of a triumph: but with Arlington there was nothing but a sentiment of revenge, caused by the first mortification he had been condemned to endure, and by that feeling of family pride which would induce him to aid in the ruin of the object by which he feared it might be infringed.

The conduct, however, of Agnese, baffled all their attempts. The experience of Arlington was as useless as the tenderness and passion of Orville were ineffectual.

It was in vain they laid plan after plan; the prudence of Agnese baffled them all: and in some proportion that their hopes of success diminished, did Arlington's fears of Hartley's marrying her increase. Lady Orville, also, from the continued coldness of Hartley to Lady Sophia, began to fear the influence of his passion for Agnese was too great to permit the success of her schemes, and she began most earnestly to wish for her fall. The confidence which Lady Emily had reposed in the countess had so far excited her curiosity, that, in one of her letters to her friend, the "divorcee," she had desired her to procure and write to her all the particulars she could learn respecting her story; and about this time a letter brought intelligence upon this subject which made her eyes sparkle with the hope of that revenge which she had so long determined to wreak upon the head of Arlington. The information this letter contained, suggested a method for the accomplishment of this long-projected scheme of vengeance, in a manner that her most sanguine wishes could never have anticipated. She concealed the contents of this letter within her own breast; and in her anxiety for the gratification of her hatred, forgetting every thing that was due to her sex, she urged Lord Arlington to the completion of the ruin of Agnese, with a perseverance that astonished that nobleman.

As he would detail to her his hopes of success, she would fix him with one of her looks, in which it was difficult for her to conceal the malicious

triumph with which she received the information he afforded her of their progress. A diabolical pleasure seemed to accompany this accomplishment of her vengeance, at the same time that she hoped to accelerate her wishes with regard to the establishment of her daughter.

We have observed, that in the midst of the admiration she inspired, Agnese had no friend. It was in vain that she looked around through all the circle who flattered and applauded her, for one in whom she could place that confidence which had hitherto been given to the Sister Theresa in Italy. Orville had observed this wish, and had striven his utmost to persuade her to place this confidence in him, and to become the person by whose advise she would be guided. But it was one of her own sex that he saw she wanted; and both Arlington and himself felt how important an addition to their powers it would be, if this friendship and confidence could be directed to any quarter which they could command.

Men with such means in their power as Orville and Arlington, are never long in finding abettors in any scheme they may project; and they saw in Mrs. Wheeler a woman who was every way calculated to promote their present object.

Mrs. Wheeler was one of those women, who, lost themselves to every sense of female virtue, conceive its existence in another a tacit reproach to themselves; and who derive a pleasure in lending their aid to reduce others of their sex to their own level. She had herself been beautiful and well educated, and had passed her earlier days as governess in several fashionable families, where her schemes to form a matrimonial establishment, had ended in her own betrayal and subsequent desertion. Her passions had been too high for her principles; and she fell, stung with the reflection, that she had fallen the victim of her attempts to entrap others. She was not one of those women whose error had been confined to a solitary lapse from the paths of virtue: with her, vice became a principle of action, and the gratification of her passions the main-spring of her existence. Ultimately succeeding by her blandishments in attracting the attention of Mr. Wheeler, whose daughter she had been engaged to educate, she contrived so to impose upon his weakness, that he made her his wife. He thus placed a tyrant at the head of his family, to whose violent passions and profligate conduct he soon became a victim, and died with no other revenge than cutting her off from every thing but her own jointure. This was just sufficient for her to keep up a moderate establishment; and she soon figured a Lady Orville of a lower grade. Her house became the rendezvous of a certain set of females, whose conduct had shut them out in a great measure from respectable society; and of young men of rank, fashion, and wealth, who were glad of the freedom which such an establishment as that of Mrs. Wheeler afforded. Her parties were therefore made the medium of intrigue; and there were few females who frequented them, who were not open to any proposition that might be addressed to them; while a marriage certificate was not at all an essential passport into the circle of her evening coteries.

Mrs. Wheeler found her account in a life of this sort. In its pursuit she tried to keep her carriage, and her box at the opera, and to elbow her betters in the rush-room, if she could not meet them elsewhere. Lord Arlington had been one of her earliest acquaintances; and Lord Orville had of late years been among the most constant attendants of her parties; and both of them now cast their eyes towards this woman as a fit coadjutor in their schemes. With such a person much delicacy was not, of course, necessary; and it was soon determined that she should seek the acquaintance, and try to win the confidence, of Agnese and her protectors.

Educated for a governess, Mrs. Wheeler was an accomplished French and Italian scholar, a tolerable musician, and so great an adept in the art of hypocrisy, that she could assume all the gentleness of her sex at pleasure.

An introduction to the Bononi's was easily procured; and by attentions and presents she soon won upon them, while by a marked kindness and an appearance of sympathy, which she well knew how to assume, she soon also gained the affection of Agnese.

Feeling severely, as she did, the absence of the only female friend she had ever possessed, she received with pleasure the proffered attentions of Mrs. Wheeler, and was soon won by the maternal kindness which characterized her conduct, to look upon her as a friend. Mrs. Wheeler, by her arts and blandishments, soon improved this feeling into affection, and became so much the possessor of her confidence, that all the time not devoted to the cultivation or pursuit of her profession was spent in her society.

This was precisely what Lord Orville had wished; and he soon became impatient to profit by Mrs. Wheeler's success. This was not, however, so easy a task as either of them imagined. It was in vain that Mrs. Wheeler sounded the heart, or rather the inclinations of her young friend, or threw out hints and inuendoes about Lord Orville; they made no impression on the heart of Agnese, and she was afraid to proceed farther, lest by alarming her principle, she should open her eyes too clearly to the motives which made Mrs. Wheeler cultivate her friendship.

The more correct, however, that Mrs. Wheeler found the principles of Agnese, the more bitter reproach did she feel them to be to the conduct of her own life, and the more determined was she in her endeavors to subdue and degrade her.

Had Agnese been differently placed, she would, perhaps, sooner have seen this, and appreciated the real character of her pretended friend; but, deprived of all kinds of female friendship, and meeting female society only in the crowds where she was professedly engaged, she was deceived by Mrs. Wheeler's kindness into a belief of her excellence; and her heart feeling the necessity of the friendship of one of her own sex, she easily yielded her affections to an artful woman, whose only object was to betray her. She therefore spent a great part of her leisure time at the house of Mrs. Wheeler, where, of course, every opportunity was afforded for the prosecution of Lord Orville's addresses.

In the meantime her intimacy with such a woman did not pass unnoticed. By Lady Emily it was heard with pain, and by indifferent persons with a sneer, and with the usual observation of

"what else could you expect?" and thus Lord Orville was gradually obtaining the credit of success, without being one jot nearer to the accomplishment of his end.

It was in vain that Mrs. Wheeler was enabled by the liberality of Arlington and Orville, to spread out those allurements which are generally so seductive to young people, or in vain attempted to undermine her principles by those insidious sentiments which she knew so well how to introduce, there was an inherent sense of right and wrong in the mind of Agnese, which baffled all these common attempts at seduction.

As the season was, however, now drawing to its close, it was determined that some decisive blow should be struck, that should, at any rate, tend to the fruition of Lord Orville's wishes, and place an insurmountable barrier to any union with Hartley. Lord Arlington was urged to the speedier adoption of this measure, by insidious hints, purposely thrown out by Lady Orville, that both Lady Emily and Mr. Hartley were far less averse than formerly to the match; and thus she hoped, at the same time that she gratified her revenge, to promote her own projects.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A PLOT.

While Lascelles had been hurrying to his own destruction, Arlington and Orville were plotting the destruction of Agnese. Every thing that wealth could procure, every thing that art could devise, every thing that the experience of the one and the passion of the other could suggest, was put in requisition to accomplish their purpose; nor was Lady Orville backward in her attempts to excite Lord Arlington in a project in which she had her own revenge to gratify, and her own private project of ambition to accomplish.

Still, however, Lord Orville made no progress in her affections; her whole heart was devoted to the passion which she was trying in vain to eradicate as hopeless; and though the name of Hartley never passed her lips in any of her communications with Mrs. Wheeler, yet that lady's experience in her sex soon discovered the secret passion which preyed upon her, and prognosticated that Lord Orville would never succeed in his pursuit by fair means. Orville feigned to acknowledge this bitter truth, while he cursed the plain dealing of the devil who told him of it, and urged him to other measures.

As the season was now near its close, the professional engagements of Agnese were not so numerous; and it was determined that Mrs. Wheeler should tempt her to a country excursion, for which the weak state of her health, arising from anxiety and fatigue, formed quite a sufficient apology.

A cottage in a retired spot, about five or six miles from London, was therefore taken as a country residence, and Mrs. Wheeler established as its mistress Situated at a considerable distance from any other house, enclosed towards the road by high garden walls, and entirely encompassed by the grounds and garden at the back, which led close to the river, it seemed a spot particularly adapted to the infamous purpose for which it was hired. Here Mrs. Wheeler held several of her nightly orgies of her set; and here it was determined that she should inveigle Agnese, under the pretence of benefiting her health; and Orville determined she should not quit the place without the accomplishment of his purpose.

Lady Orville knew every movement of Mrs. Wheeler and Lord Arlington, who were the only two that appeared in the affair, while Orville remained in the back ground; but she was at a loss to guess who could be the lover of Agnese; and from the mystery with which the matter was treated by Lord Arlington in his conversations with her on the subject, at length really began to imagine that it was some illustrious person of the realm for whom Arlington thus condescended to exert the power of his experience, and to become an abettor instead of a principal. If any thing could have made Arlington sink still lower in her estimation, it would have been his conduct in this affair; for there is no degradation equal to that of being the caterer for the vicious pleasures of another. It can find an apology in no friendship; no principle can be found to palliate it; and if there is any one thing that can degrade a man in the esteem, either of his own or the other sex, it is thus lending himself to the vices of others.

During this period, Lord Orville paid every attention to Agnese that circumstances permitted, and allowed her to see the admiration she had excited, without ever offending her by its expressions.

Lord Arlington had been frequently surprised at the interest Lady Orville seemed to take in the success of their schemes; but attributed it, in his letters to Villars, to that love which all the fallen of the sex have to reduce others to their own level. In these letters he described the progress of their schemes for the ruin of Agnese, almost with the same zeal that he had formerly described his own intrigues to the same friend. Indeed, in spite of the many high qualities of his mind, and of those attainments which rendered him one of the most accomplished men of the day, this wretched man was dwindling into one of the most degraded of human beings. He felt the insecurity of his footing in society—he envied the pleasures he could no longer enjoy—and he sought to preserve the favor of the circle in which he mixed only by the magnificent entertainments, which were annoyances to him, and by a profusion of luxuries, which were spread in vain to tempt his own satiated appetite. He had a sufficient knowledge of the world to see that his only claim to apparent respect rested upon these adventitious circumstances, and he was content to purchase the appearance of that which he was sensible could no longer exist in reality. He had felt a kind of reflected excitement in aiding the pursuit of Orville; and in his determination to prevent the possibility of Hartley's marrying Agnese, he had perhaps proceeded farther, in the aid he had given and promised Orville, than he originally intended. But having once said the thing should be, he was as pertinacious in its ac-

complishmont, as he was formerly in affairs of his own.

Lord Orville's passion for Agnese, however, now became too violent for him to control, and he urged Mrs. Wheeler no longer to defer the opportunity which he now determined the cottage should afford him. This, however, required all the lady's delicacy and dexterity of management. The old people were invited at first to accompany her: then there was a method to be invented to prevent them putting their intention in execution; and Agnese was to be persuaded to make the excursion without them.

Every thing conspired to aid their wishes; the day was fixed for the visit; the old people were detained by circumstances in which an investment of part of their property was involved. Agnese was persuaded not to forego her visit to the country; but even agreed to spend two or three days with her friend, in the retirement of her cottage; and it was determined that Lord Orville should be likewise a guest, unknown to Agnese; and, during the continuance of the visit, it was to be his own blame if he did not accomplish a purpose to which the convenient Mrs. Wheeler was to lend every facility.

Lord Arlington, with an unabated and determined pertinacity, for which he could not account to himself, interfered in and saw to every arrangement; and was so anxious, on the day fixed for the visit of the unfortunate victim of their joint villany, that he actually rode in the direction of the cottage, to ascertain by his own eyes, that Agnese had actually placed herself in the house of Mrs. Wheeler.

Of this he was very soon assured by meeting them on the road to the cottage; and he immediately galloped off to Orville to inform him of the success of their schemes, and to urge him to the final completion that very night; a proposition to which Lord Orville's inclinations were but too prompt to agree. It was determined, therefore, that Orville should dine at the cottage, and, instead of departing when he took his leave in the evening, should remain concealed somewhere in the house, till the retirement of the household should afford him a fair opportunity.

Some evil genius seemed to lend its aid to the accomplishment of this diabolical scheme, since every thing conspired to its success.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

A DISCOVERY.

That part of the London winter-season was now come, when it is difficult to shut out the broad glare of daylight from our nightly dinner parties. All the country was one universal bloom of loveliness; but the orgies of the season, in town, were not yet passed; although the lateness of the setting sun, and the early period that gave the world again to daylight, scarcely allowed sufficient hours of darkness for their enjoyment.

On the day in question, the day fixed for the attempt, and intended to be crowned by the accomplishment of this nefarious scheme against the innocence and happiness of a lovely being, deserving the best, instead of the worst, at the hands of all who knew her, Arlington was of course engaged to one of the thousand-and-one dinner parties, where a lord, let him be whom he will, is generally a welcome guest. Having ascertained, however, beyond a doubt, that Agnese had fallen into the snare spread for her by Mrs. Wheeler, and that she had actually accompanied her to the house which this trio had hired to be the scene of her ruin, he turned his horse's head homeward, with the intention of dressing for his party.

In his slow ride to Audley Square, Lady Orville's landau passed him in Park Lane, and she kissed her hand to him "en passant," while, as their eyes met for moment, a smile seemed to play upon her still handsome features, accompanied by a look of triumph, that made Arlington turn away with disgust, and an internal exclamation of—"D—n the woman, she rejoices more in the ruin of one of her own sex than we do!"

Whether his excitement had subsided, in consequence of the success of their scheme having left him nothing else to do; whether his spirit and mind winced under the degrading recollection, that he was dwindled from the principal into the degraded agent of another; or whether some internal recollections, and some but half-stifled qualms of conscience, made him unwilling, or unable, to meet the eyes of his fellow-creatures in social intercourse in the midst of that society whose laws he had so frequently violated, and made him only fit company for himself—we are not in the secret: but from some one of these causes, or perhaps all of them united, he determined to remain at home, where he could hear the first intelligence from the cottage, and he gave La Tour orders to have his dinner served in the library, and to be denied to every body. Seeing his master in a state of agitation, quite unlike his usual cold and phlegmatic manner, La Tour ventured to recommend that he should not dine alone; but restless as Arlington was, he felt that he should be more at ease by himself than in society. Besides, abroad he might encounter Lady Orville, and to such a meeting he, at this moment, felt a peculiar repugnance. The expression of her face as she passed him in Park Lane still lingered on his memory, and in spite of himself, rendered him uneasy, though there was no interpretation that he could give to it that seemed to warrant the sensation it excited. La Tour's remonstrance was therefore useless, and a dinner was served in the library.

The meal was finished; his easiest fauteuil was wheeled just within the influence of a fire which blazed in the splendid chimney-piece more as an adjunct to cheerfulness than as being necessary for warmth, and Lord Arlington was left to his Bordeaux and to his reflections.

Shuddering under the influence of galling reflections, and more than usually oppressed by his continual fear of death, Lord Arlington filled and drained bumper after bumper, and summoned to his assistance all that talent for ridicule, by which he had so frequently overturned the arguments of others, in hopes it would quiet his own conscience

The fatigue of his thoughts, together with the effect of the wine, at length induced a feverish sleep, and he sunk back, exhausted by their influence, into an uneasy slumber.

The stream of his sleeping fancies followed, however, the current of his waking thoughts. Circumstances long since forgotten, or attempted to be forgotten, came before his mind's eye in full array, with all the vividness of recent occurrence. Adventure after adventure; perils, pleasures, crimes—and every peril and every pleasure had been a crime—arose one after another to his fancy, which, like a magic lantern, presented scene after scene, till his whole life appeared before him, and uninfluenced by his waking sophistry, appeared in colors which made him shrink with horror at the multiplicity of guilt by which it had been characterized.

In the midst of this cosmorama, in which another and another victim of his unbridled passions still appeared before him, came the gentle shade of his much-injured wife, who with tears and supplications, claimed at his hand their child, which appeared in the distance perishing under the weapon of a being which resembled himself; the dagger was already uplifted;—the breast of the victim was bared; he rushed forward to save her, when the figure that resembled himself suddenly changed, with that facility of transformation which is the characteristic of our sleeping fancies, into the figure of Lady Orville, who plunged the dagger into his own breast. A loud knocking at the door roused the sleeper, and rescued Lord Arlington from the horrors of his dream; but he had scarcely recovered his courage, when the library door opened, and Lady Orville was ushered into the room. Lord Arlington almost started as he saw her; she seemed like the personification of the horrors he had experienced, and he almost expected to see her realize his dream.

As the servant closed the door and retired, Lady Orville's eyes wandered round the splendid apartment; her mind seemed oppressed with recollections which that look appeared to engender, and her silence was so impressive that Lord Arlington could scarcely perform the common civilities of his house, or repress the curse which quivered on his lips at the folly of his servant for admitting such a visiter.

"Use no ceremony with me, Lord Arlington. To her whose life has been the victim of your violated oaths, ceremony and politeness are but added insult, and Cecilia Devereux will never be seated in the house of Lord Arlington." Arlington attempted to speak, but she prevented him. "I am thinking of the last time I was in this apartment; *you*, my Lord, may forget it, because it is convenient for your conscience to forget vows which you then called heaven to witness, and which you have since violated. I cannot forget it; for it was that hour of crime which gave its color to all my future existence. Then you were in the midst of youth and health; now you are overtaken by premature impotence and decrepitude—with all the vices and horrors of age, without one respectable accompaniment as a palliative. I was then artless, and but for you, innocent—what I am now, you have made me—and—"

"Lady Orville!" cried Arlington.

"Silence, my Lord—you had then your triumph—if to trample upon a broken heart that loved you, was triumph; if to become the betrayer of the innocence that trusted you, was triumph; if the basest falsehood that ever sullied the lips or blackened the heart of man, was triumph—it was yours. *My* hour of triumph is come. My vengeance hath only slept till now!"

"Your vengeance! Nay, nay, Lady Orville," interrupted Arlington, in some measure recovering his usual presence of mind, "these threats are unworthy of a woman of the world."

"A woman of the world! and who made me that woman of the world? But reproaches, as you say, are idle. My time of triumph is come, and you shall feel it—feel it while you are reflecting with the pleasure which demons only can enjoy, in the ruin of innocence. My Lord, here we need not wear our masks; they cannot hide our hearts from each other. You have for months used the utmost of your power to lure Agnese into the snare into which she has at last fallen; you have done your utmost to reduce her to that level from which you know the heir to your proud earldom would not raise her; and you have done this under the influence of a paltry pride, of a demoniac desire of vengeance against a woman who had mortified you. These were your motives."

"Devil!" said Lord Arlington, "did you not assist me?"

"I did, I did; but from a nobler motive than the one by which your base nature was instigated," replied Lady Orville; "from a motive of revenge against the perfidy of the basest creature that ever bore the name of man. That Agnese, that woman whom you have thrown into the arms of a libertine, who is at this moment perhaps struggling in the grasp of some villainous companion of your own, or is shrinking from herself and from the world in agony, at the perpetration of the deed by which she is ruined and her fame blasted for ever, is—your daughter!"

"My daughter!"

"Yes, Lord Arlington, your daughter. Oh, that I had the voice of heaven to thunder it in your ear! Your daughter, the child of that Agnes whom you betrayed under the title of wife, when you had no longer that title to bestow; the child of the only woman whom your vacillating nature ever permitted you to love truly; the child of that woman for whom I, with a hundred others, was deserted. And where is she now?—this child of guilt—weeping for the infamy into which she has been plunged by the act of her own father."

"Woman, it is false! It must be false! That child is dead."

"She is living, and will live to curse you. Think not to shield your heart from its agony by the idea of the falsehood of my assertions. I have proof upon proof. I have known it for months, and I have urged on your actions that I might enjoy the moment of my vengeance."

"Devil! demon!" exclaimed Lord Arlington. "But it cannot be. 'Tis all a lie; a black invention of a blacker mind. La Tour, La Tour, my carriage immediately!" and he broke the bell-rope in his agitation and haste to procure his carriage; and he again repeated, "I'll not believe it."

At this moment a carriage was heard to drive furiously up to the door; and in another instant La Tour burst into the library, followed by Atkins the

confidential servant of Lord Arlington's friend Villars.

Arlington started, and turned paler than before at the appearance of this man; who, breathless with his haste, and forgetting all ceremony in the importance of his mission, rushed to Lord Arlington, and, giving him a letter, said "Read, my Lord, read!"

Arlington dashed open the letter, and to his horror, read these words:—

"Arlington, I have discovered all; Agnese is your daughter; I have the fullest proof of the fact: and without daring to wait to tell you more, lest the intelligence should be too late, I have ordered Atkins to travel night and day till he arrives in Audley Square. God grant he may reach you in time, and save you from the completion of a crime, blacker than all that has gone before.

"F. Villars."

By this time La Tour had hurried Atkins out of the room, unwilling to expose to him the scene which he knew too well was passing between Lady Orville and his master.

Lord Arlington was at first stupefied by this confirmation of the Countess's intelligence. He repeated, almost in a state of insensibility, "Why, the woman speaks truth—this confirms it! Then rising from his unnatural calmness into the excess of agitation and passion, he exclaimed, "I may yet be in time! Orville cannot yet have accomplished his purpose!" and dashing the Countess aside, (who at the name of Orville had approached him,) with a violence that threw her on the sofa, he rushed from the library through the ante-room and hall and leaping into the chaise which had brought Villar's servant express, he ordered the post-boys to last their jaded steeds in the direction of the cottage, and promised them immense rewards, if they would but arrive in time.

Lady Orville, to whom this was the first intimation that her son was the friend for whom Lord Orville had acted the part of Pandar, in an instant saw how much more of crime and guilt hung upon the circumstances than she at first had apprehended. Horror and remorse seemed suddenly to have taken possession of her mind; and clasping her hands in agony, and exclaiming, "Orville—did he say Orville?" she sprung into her carriage, and being well acquainted with the place in which the crime was intended to be consummated, she directed her coachman to follow the chaise with the utmost speed of horses.

CHAPTER XL.

RETRIBUTION.

It may be the fashion, and it may be the philosophy, to laugh at and ridicule the idea of presentiment; yet who is there that has not, in the course of his life, felt that sinking of the spirit, that indefinite apprehension of something that is going to happen, which almost arrives as a prescience of evil and seems to warn us of its approach.

It was with a feeling something akin to this, that Agnese parted from Mrs. Wheeler for the night, and retired to the apartment prepared for her. The commencement of the day had been passed by her in the full enjoyment of the quiet and retirement which her late anxious and public life had rendered doubly pleasing to her; but even during the morning, she had been half alarmed as well as surprised, at the freedom of Mrs. Wheeler's conversation. They were joined at an early dinner by Lord Orville and two or three more guests, both male and female, whose manners were any thing but pleasing to or consonant with Agnese's ideas of propriety. She could not but observe, too, that every opportunity was sought to leave her alone with Lord Orville, who, contrary to all his former practice, almost persecuted her with his attentions, and finished by an open declaration of his passion, couched in terms that were calculated to offend women of a much less sense of delicacy and female decorum than Agnese possessed. Surprised and offended, she succeeded in checking his presumption, and could attribute his conduct to nothing but the influence of wine. From this moment, she kept constantly close to Mrs. Wheeler; but it soon became evident that Lord Orville was encouraged by her in his pursuit, and that she attributed Agnese's conduct to ridiculous and unnecessary fastidiousness, if not to affectation.

Fatigued and disgusted, nay, almost alarmed at conduct in every respect so new, both on the part of Lord Orville and her hostess, Agnese rejoiced when the party broke up, and half displeased, she soon retired to her own apartment, determined to return home as early in the morning as she possibly could.

Mrs. Wheeler conducted her to the apartments prepared for her, and ridiculing the anger she expressed at the freedoms of Lord Orville, bade her good night, leaving Agnese far from being pleased at her conduct, and oppressed by a lowness of spirits for which she could not account. A presentiment of evil lingered in her mind, and prevented her from immediately seeking her bed; she dreaded she knew not what, and almost smiled at her own fears when she found herself unconsciously examining the fastenings of the door and windows of her apartment. These she secured, but still felt restless and uneasy; and two or three times, as she sat down to undress, did she fancy she heard noises near her. Sometimes her ears seemed to catch the sound of suppressed breathing; at others, the creaking of the wainscot alarmed her, till, although ashamed of her own fears, and convinced that they were chimerical, she could not help wishing most ardently for the morning, and was two or three times on the point of ringing the bell, to request that one of the female servants might be allowed to remain with her for the night. It was in vain that she tried to argue herself out of these fears; they increased upon her in spite of her reason, until she was in a state of serious agitation, at which she was both alarmed and ashamed. The quietness of the night was now also broken in upon by the rising wind and the rain, which began to patter violently against the window, while one or two distant peals of thunder gave indication of a

coming storm. Oppressed and uneasy, Agnese at length became too much alarmed to think of going to bed; and stirring the fire in her dressing-room, she determined to sit by it till daylight. She had scarcely taken her seat with this determination, when she was again alarmed by the sound of hard breathing—she was now no longer deceived; the sound grew louder and more distinct, and was immediately succeeded by a rustling noise that proceeded from an inner door of her apartment, which she had examined and found fastened on the other side. At this moment the key turned in this door; Agnese started up, and waiting the event with breathless and anxious suspense, almost screamed with terror when she saw the door slowly open, and Lord Orville enter. His step was unsteady, and his countenance flushed; for Lord Orville, villain as he was, had been obliged to have recourse to stimulus to inspire him with sufficient courage for the infamous deed he had determined upon. His eye, to Agnese's apprehension, glared with an unnatural brightness, and his whole frame and appearance betrayed the influence of uncontrolable passion. As he approached, she rushed to the side of the fireplace to seize the bell, and again screamed with agony when she discovered that it had been rolled up and placed out of her reach. Lord Orville laughed at her impotent attempt, and seizing her hands as she would have retreated to the farther extremity of her apartment, poured into her ears the declaration of his passion; told the length of time he had smothered it in his breast; detailed all the pains he had taken to get her into his power; and entreated her to return his love with some appearance of kindness.

Sickening with disgust at language to which she was unaccustomed, and almost fainting from apprehension, Agnese felt the necessity for her presence of mind, and tried to argue and entreat him into calmness, while she receded, with her hands still in his, toward the entrance to the room; when suddenly releasing herself from his grasp, she seized hold of the lock, and by a sudden effort attempted to open it—but shrunk back with agony on finding that it was fastened on the other side. It now scarcely needed the subsequent boast of Lord Orville to convince her that Mrs. Wheeler was in the plot against her, and that she was completely in the power of an unprincipled villain, who expressed both by his words and actions, his determination to make the best use of it, and that she should not escape him. The violence of his passions, acted upon by the wine he had drunk, indeed, left him no longer master of his own actions, and he seemed inclined to proceed to immediate extremities. It was in vain that she implored him as a man of honor, as he valued the honor of those dear to him, to desist; she spoke to a heart of stone; her appeal was made to one who had no feeling but for himself, no sense but that of his own gratification. The storm without which now seemed to rage with increased violence, scarcely exceeded the tumult of those passions by which Lord Orville was agitated; his vehement entreaties were becoming threats; his oaths were those of impatience as well as love; he was one moment on his knees in passionate entreaty, and in the next had seized her in his arms, threatening the extremity of violence—when one of those gusts of passion was interrupted by a sudden and violent ringing of bells. This was immediately succeeded by the opening and shutting of doors, and by a bustle which was heard even above the storm. Lord Orville, however, well convinced that none of Mrs. Wheeler's household would venture near the apartment of Agnese, again seized her in his arms, when the door of the dressing-room was suddenly burst open, and Lord Arlington rushed into the apartment, breathless with anxiety and horror.

With a momentary renewal of his former strength he dashed Orville aside, as he exclaimed, "Orville, villain, desist!" He could articulate no more. Orville, surprised at the sudden and unexpected appearance of Arlington, had almost relinquished his hold of Agnese; but roused by the blow, and stung to madness at the idea of losing the fruits of his villany, he by one effort again released Agnese from the convulsive grasp of Arlington, to whom she clung for protection, and would most likely have felled her deliverer to the ground, had he not been prevented by the sudden discharge of one of the pistols with which Lord Arlington had armed himself, and the contents of which lodged in his breast. Orville's hand relaxed its hold; his eyes swam in dizziness; he reeled backwards, and exclaiming, "Arlington, madman, you have murdered me!" sunk on a seat that was near him.

Agnese, unconscious of every thing but her escape, still clung to Arlington; all her former dislike of him subsiding in comparison of the terror she had felt at the attack of Lord Orville, and at the joy she experienced at her unexpected delivery. At this moment Lady Orville entered, followed by Mrs. Wheeler; she had heard the report of the pistol as she entered the house, and seeing the state of Lord Orville, who appeared to be dying, and the weapon lying upon the floor, she rushed to his assistance. Lord Orville looked on her for a moment, and fainted from loss of blood; Mrs. Wheeler despatched servants for medical aid, and immediately applied herself to staunch the blood, while Lady Orville exclaimed,

"Oh, Orville! my son, my son! look up!—it is your mother calls." Then suddenly addressing Arlington, and in her agony losing all sense of shame, all recollections of prudence, she said, "Look here! behold another victim of your licentious passions! Arlington, you are the murderer of your own son!"

Arlington looked bewildered. "Yes, Arlington, it is true; there," pointing to Agnese, "is the offspring of the innocent Agnese, your murdered wife: here lies the offspring of our mutual guilt, weltering in his blood, the victim of a father's crimes!"

Arlington's accusing conscience told him that this might be too true, and shuddering at the precipice of crime on which his own villany had placed his children, as well as shrinking from the spirit he had roused in the countess, he took advantage of her attention to Orville, who began to give some signs of life, to bear Agnese from the scene of horror, and placing her in the carriage, immediately ordered it to Lady Emily Hartley's to whose care he determined to confide his child. Quite unconscious, in his agitation, of the impropriety of raising the Hartley family at such an hour, he drove

directly to the door, feeling that his strength was becoming so much exhausted, that if the remainder of his task were not performed immediately it might not be performed at all; for he was sensible that his late agitation had been too great for his enfeebled frame, and he had the greatest difficulty to continue the exertion and energy of his mind long enough to reach Hartley-house.

Raising the servants, he entreated an interview with Lady Emily. It was granted as fast as she could make herself ready to receive him in her dressing-room, and he had scarcely confided to her the discovery he had so lately and so providentially made, and seen his child clasped in the maternal embrace of her mother's earliest friend, before, overcome by the exertion he had undergone, the blood rushed to his head, and Arlington fell in a fit upon the floor.

Medical assistance was of course instantly procured; but though immediate death was prevented, Lord Arlington only recovered the few days that remained to him of life, to be the victim of mental alienation. Scenes of horror seemed perpetually present to his imagination; he groaned with internal agony, or started with apprehension at some terrific vision. In the language he uttered that could be understood, prayers were mingled with curses, plasphemy with his calls for mercy. He cried perpetually for water—ice—ice—cold water, to quench the fire in his heart and brain; and no one approached him whom he did not accuse of heaping burning coals upon his head. When exhaustion prevented his crying aloud, the internal workings of his agony could be discovered by the restless eye, or the fixed look of horror with which he appeared to gaze upon some dreaded object; and during the remaining period of existence his eyes never closed till they were closed for ever, on the third day after the attack, when he yielded to the power of death amid apalling shrieks of agony, in which he cried "Save me, save me—he comes—Death—hell—I *will* not die! I *will not* die!" and he expired with these words upon his lips. * *

CHAPTER LXI.

A SUMMARY.

As the summing up of the evidence by the judge is generally the most tedious part of the trial, since there are no new facts to be elicited, and the auditors have no novelty to interest them, so is the last chapter of a novel generally the most uninteresting, since the reader has already anticipated its contents.

The story of Lord Arlington and Lady Orville, together with the scene at Mrs. Wheeler's, were obliged to be made public by the legal inquiries which were the necessary result of Lord Orville's death; and the countess was, of course, shut out for ever from society, and visited by the contempt and scorn of that world for whose good opinion she had sacrificed so much. In her retirement she had not one pleasant recollection to look back upon; and deserted by her daughter, who could not of course suffer the contaminating intercourse of such a mother, she lingered out the remainder of her days in bitterness with her divorcée friend on the continent.

For Langley, of whom we have lost sight since he has been buried in the voluminous proceedings of his suit in Chancery, fortune had yet some good in store, which came just in time to prevent the total ruin of his hopes. An old legal friend of the Admiral arrived from India, having an executed copy of a will made in favor of his sister and her child, Langley's wife, which, being his last will, of course put an end to the Chancery proceedings, and Langley in possession of his wife's fortune, and, to use a vulgar proverb, as "it never rains but it pours," just at this time he received a characteristic epistle from Harry Vaux, informing him, that in searching through the books of his parish for some legal purpose, he had discovered the register of a marriage between Charles Langley and Susannah Maybloom in the year 18—; and upon inquiry found one of the witnesses living in the person of an old nurse, who, though long bed-ridden, had not yet lost the use of her faculties, and from whose evidence the Rev. Mr. Vaux had no doubt but that the register alluded to Langley's father and mother, and was doubtless the record of that secret marriage of which Langley had heard, but which he could never prove.

A very little inquiry set this matter beyond a doubt, and being now the acknowledged heir-at-law to his late father, the usurer was applied to, to disgorge his ill-gotten wealth in favor of the rightful possessor; old Langley, hugging himself in the power of possession, set the applicants at defiance, and entrenched himself behind all the quibbles of the law. A really respectable solicitor, however, can always annihilate the projects of those pettifoggers who live merely by the quibbles of their profession; and the old gentleman was soon glad to capitulate on condition of retaining some portion of the money he had amassed. In the investigation of the papers connected with his transactions, enough was discovered to set aside at least one-half of the annuities, and to release a great portion of the securities which had been granted him by the imprudence and folly of Lascelles; who by these means recovered such a portion of his fortune as to retire to one of his family seats, with the prospect of becoming a more respectable, though not so rich a man as formerly.

The result of the discovery of the birth of Agnese may be easily imagined by those who have a just conception of the character of Lady Emily and her husband, now become Lord and Lady Arlington. Could Lady Emily have had her choice of a wife for her son, it would have been the child of the beloved friend of her youth, whose fate she had so long regretted. That Agnese was the daughter of this friend, was fully proved by the evidence sent over by Villars, and by that likeness which Lady Emily could trace in every feature to those of her mother; and had fortune been wanted to render such a marriage more desirable, the same evidence that proved her birth, also proved her title to considerable wealth, under the will of the person to whom Agnese had been confided by her mother; a will that had hitherto been concealed by the cu-

pidity of a confidential servant, who was with this gentleman when he expired; and who, tempted by the value of his personal effects, and the property of which his master was possessed on the Continent, had placed Agnese with the Bononis, instead of bringing her to England, according to the dying commands of his master. For twenty years this man had enjoyed his ill-gotten wealth, together with such portions of the property from England as could be obtained by means of orders forged in his master's name, till overtaken by a severe illness in some Italian village, and finding himself dying, he confided the story of his villany to an Englishman who was staying at the same alberga. This Englishman was Villars, who, we have seen, lost no time in communicating the intelligence to his friend.

Hartley and Agnese were now, therefore, left to the full indulgence of their mutual affection, and found a double pleasure in its gratification, from the recollection of their conduct when they deemed their passion to be hopeless, and from the approbation that this conduct had elicited from Hartley's parents, and the esteem which it had won from them for Agnese, before they knew to how much of their love she was entitled by her birth.

It was, therefore, determined that, as soon as a sufficient time should have elapsed after the death of Lord Arlington, the same day should secure the happiness of Hartley and Agnese, and of Forrester and Emily.

Whether that time was impatiently waited for by the lovers, or whether the pleasures of anticipation lengthened or shortened this period to their imaginations, we leave the reader to determine. The period at length arrived, and Agnese received the vows of Hartley at the altar, his father acting as hers in the marriage ceremony. Forrester, on the same day received the hand of Emily Hartley; and blest with the full consent of her parents, we leave them to the only true enjoyment of love—that which is derived from wedded happiness.

CONCLUSION.

Our Oxonian was at length happy; blest in a union with a woman he loved—and that union fully approved by his parents—life once more appeared to his anticipations as it had done at his entrance into life. Every thing with regard to the future was unclouded; and our hero, as he pressed his wife to his bosom, and acknowledged her goodness, again wrote to his friend Strictland that the "world was a beautiful world." Their honey-moon which was passed in the retirement of one of the Arlington estates, where Agnese made herself acquainted with her new tenants, and learned from her husband how to make herself beloved by them, was succeeded by a tour in which it was intended to visit all the different estates of which Hartley would now, one day or other, become the master. It was in the prosecution of this tour that the new married couple arrived at a small inn in the village of —— in Dorsetshire. The beauty of the place induced the determination to dine and to pass the night there. After dinner, Agnese had retired to prepare for an evening walk, and Hartley was sitting in the full enjoyment of his happiness, gazing on the lovely and quiet scene that lay spread in all its landscape beauties before the window of his apartment, when he was surprised by the appearance of a lovely child, who passed the window with his little frock loaded with flowers. The child's dress was black and this sombre apparel formed such a contrast to the rosy cheeks of the child, and the gayety of the flowers which it was carrying, that Hartley's curiosity was excited, and going to the window which opened to the ground, he called the child to him. As it approached, he was struck by the appearance of melancholy, of which there were evident traces in its infant countenance.

"What are you going to do with your flowers, my pretty fellow?" asked Hartley.

"To carry them to mamma," lisped the child. "Mamma loves flowers, and little Frank loves mamma?"

"And where is your mamma?" again asked Hartley.

"There," said the infant, pointing to the burial place of the village church, which raised its humble spire at a little distance from the inn; "in the churchyard—there—they have hid mamma!" and a flood of tears poured down the child's cheeks.

Unaccountably interested in grief which seemed beyond the years of the infant by whom it was exhibited, Hartley asked if the child would show his "mamma's grave." Delighted at the interest taken in its feelings, the child replied, "Oh, yes!" and led the way through the garden of the inn, from which a wicket led at once into the churchyard.

It was an edifice of gray stone, with a square end, dignified with the name of tower, in which was hung the only bell that proclaimed all the simple annals of the place, by sounding for christenings, marriages and funerals—that called the lonely inhabitants of the village to their devotions, and tolled over their remains as they were borne to their long and last home. The walls of the church were spread over with ivy—yet there was a cheerful quiet look about the place that gave it the appearance of a resting-place rather than a charnel-house; and at this instant the glaring beams of the setting sun shone brightly on the windows, and threw a crimson tint even upon the cold gray stone and green ivy of the church. One spot alone was in deep shadow, and this was a nook formed by one of the angles of the church, in which rose a yew tree, whose foliage was almost black, in comparison with the neighboring ivy which rose around it, and the turf which spreads its green carpet beneath it.

To this dark spot the child directed his footsteps, and stopping under the yew tree, pointed to the only white stone which rose in the precincts of its shade. It was but a rude attempt to perpetuate the memory of the dead. Hartley cast his eyes upon the humble monument, and started as he read the words—"Caroline Dormer."

He gazed for a few moments on the inscription; a cloud of mingled sensations and recollections of shame and repentance came over his mind—eh burst into tears, and clasping the child to his

bosom, gave way to the bitterness of his feelings, rendered more intense by the contrast of his present situation with the premature fate of Caroline.

By a little inquiry, Hartley discovered that an aged aunt of Caroline's had resided in the village, and had some few years since received a widowed niece into her protection, who became beloved and respected by every body for her exemplary conduct, and pitied for the grief with which she mourned her husband, and to which she at length fell an early victim.

In the full possession of his riches, and in the full enjoyment of happiness, the fate of Caroline dashed Hartley's cup of joy with bitterness; and many were the pangs which his repentance for his early error inflicted during his future life, in which, however, he attempted to atone in kindness to the child for the wrongs done the mother

THE END.

FALKLAND.

A NOVEL.

BY SIR E. L. BULWER.

AUTHOR OF "LUCRETIA," "THE ROUE," "THE OXONIANS," "ZANONI," "NIGHT AND MORNING," "LAST OF THE BARONS," "ALICE," "ERNEST MALTRAVERS," "EUGENE ARAM," "DEVEREUX," "LAST DAYS OF POMPEII," "RIENZI," "PAUL CLIFFORD," "PELHAM," "HAROLD," ETC., ETC

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VIOLET

ENGLAND

PREFACE.

I TRUST that I shall not be considered to despise, when I disclaim for this publication, the title of a Novel. I feel, on the contrary, that to most readers it will be less, and can scarcely flatter myself that to a few it will be more. For one class, my work will be too frivolous; for another too dull. The cold will be displeased, and the sanguine disappointed; the former with descriptions of feelings they cannot recognise as true; the latter with reflections upon life inimical to the philosophy they adopt. Whatever has been my motive for publishing, it was not the anticipation of success; and probably no one, in making a similar experiment, has ever claimed more sincerely the merit of diffidence as to the result.

Perhaps, however altered for publication, the first idea of this history had its foundation in fact; perhaps, among

the letters now given to the world in the hope that they may "point a moral," there are some not originally written to "adorn a tale;" but this would be matter of idle affirmation in me, and unavailing inquiry in others. Nor would it be any answer to those who may find the characters unnatural, and the sentiments exaggerated, could I assert that the characters had existed, and the sentiments had been felt: in a state of society, where all things are artificial, nothing seems so false as that which is really true.

I have some apprehensions lest by those readers, who judge of the whole only by a part, the end of this work should be censured because misunderstood. I have some apprehensions lest occasional descriptions be considered too vividly coloured, or sketches of feeling too faithfully portrayed; but let it be remembered, before I am condemned, that no mistake has been so great (though so common) in morals, as to lay down a penalty without particularising the offence; and, if I have copied truth in showing the punishment, it was necessary also to study the same model in recording the annals of the passions. But, though I confess I have aimed at a resemblance, I have carefully avoided an embellishment; never once in the picture of guilt have I attempted to varnish its misery, or to gloss over its shame. If my story has been founded on the errors of the heart, it is because the most useful of morals may be gathered from the consequences they bring.

In the character of Falkland I have wished to show that all virtue is weak, and that all wisdom is unavailing, where there is no pervading and fixed principle to become at once our criterion for every new variation of conduct, and our pledge for pursuing, if we have once resolvəd to adopt it. Nor is it only in the general plot, but in the scattered reflections it embraces, that I have attempted to realise what ought to be the great object of all human compositions.

If it be the good fortune of this volume to meet with some to whom the passions have been the tutors of reflection, who deem that observations on our nature, even if erroneous in themselves, are always beneficial to truth, and who think that more knowledge of the secret heart may often be condensed into a single thought than scattered over a thousand events; if it be the good fortune of this volume to meet with such, it is to them that I fearlessly entrust it —not, indeed, to be approved in its execution, but at least to be acquitted in its design.

It now only remains to be added, that in entering a career with no motive and ambition in common with those of his competitors, the Author earnestly trusts that he shall be exonerated from the charge of presumption, if he cannot adopt the language of hope or apprehension which is customary with others: men who pretend to experience, not to genius, are less likely to miscalculate the bounds of their merits, or be susceptible to general opinion as to their ex-

tent. If the author has reflected erroneously, it is because events have led him rather to embody his own than to borrow the conclusions of another: if he has offended in his delineation of the feelings, it is because he has wrought from no model but remembrance; and if he cannot now feel much eagerness of interest in the success of his attempt, it is because, from his acquaintance with mankind, he has shaped out an empire for himself which their praise cannot widen, and which their censure is unable to destroy.

London, March 7th, 1827.

FALKLAND.

A NOVEL.

BY SIR E. L. BULWER.

BOOK I.

From Erasmus Falkland, Esq., to the Hon. Frederick Monkton.

L——, May —, 1822.

You are mistaken, my dear Monkton! Your description of the gaiety of "the season" gives me no emotion. You speak of pleasure; I remember no labour so wearisome: you enlarge upon its changes; no sameness appears to me so monotonous. Keep, then, your pity for those who require it. From the height of my philosophy I compassionate *you*. No one is so vain as a recluse; and your jests at my hermitship and hermitage cannot penetrate the folds of a self-conceit, which does not envy you in your suppers at D——House, nor even in your waltzes with Eleanor ——.

It is a ruin rather than a house which I inhabit. I have not been at L—— since my return from abroad, and during those years the place has gone rapidly to decay; perhaps, for that reason, it suits me better, *tel maitre telle maison*.

Of all my possessions this is the least valuable in itself, and derives the least interest from the associations of childhood, for it was not at L—— that any part of that period was spent. I have, however, chosen it for my present retreat, because here only I am personally unknown, and therefore little likely to be disturbed. I do not, indeed, wish for the

interruptions designed as civilities; I rather gather around myself, link after link, the chains that connected me with the world; I find among my own thoughts that variety and occupation which you only experience in your intercourse with others; and I make, like the Chinese, my map of the universe consist of a circle in a square—the circle is my own empire of thought *and self;* and it is to the scanty corners which it leaves without, that I banish whatever belongs to the remainder of mankind.

About a mile from L—— is Mr. Mandeville's beautiful villa of E——, in the midst of grounds which form a delightful contrast to the savage and wild scenery by which they are surrounded. As the house is at present quite deserted, I have obtained, through the gardener, a free admittance into his domains, and I pass there whole hours, indulging, like the hero of the *Lutrin*, "*une sainte oisivete*," listening to a little noisy brook, and letting my thoughts be almost as vague and idle as the birds which wander among the trees that surround me. I could wish, indeed, that this simile were in all things correct—that those thoughts if as free, were also as happy as the objects of my comparison; and could, like them, after the rovings of the day, turn at evening to a resting-place, and be still. We are the dupes and the victims of our senses; while we use them to gather from external things the hoards that we store within, we cannot foresee the punishments we prepare for ourselves. The remembrance which stings, and the hope which deceives, the passions which promise us rapture, which reward us with despair, and the thoughts which, if they constitute the healthful action, make also the feverish excitement of our minds. What sick man has not dreamt in his delirium every thing that our philosophers have said?* But I am growing into my old habit of gloomy reflection, and it is time that I should conclude. I meant to have written you a letter as light as your own; if I have failed it is no wonder.—"Notre cœur est un instrument incomplet—une lyre ou il manque des cordes, et ou nous sommes forces de rendre les accens de la joie, sur le ton consacre aux soupirs."

* Quid ægrotus unquam somniavit quod philosophorum aliquis non dixerit?—Lactantius.

From the same to the same.

You ask me to give you some sketch of my life, and of that *bel mondo* which wearied me so soon. Men seldom reject an opportunity to talk of themselves; and I am not unwilling to re-examine the past, to reconnect it with the present, and to gather from a consideration of each what hopes and expectations are still left to me for the future.

But my detail must be rather of thought than of action: most of those whose fate has been connected with mine are now living, and I would not, even to you, break that tacit confidence which much of my history would require. After all, you will have no loss. The actions of another may interest—but, for the most part, it is only his reflections which come home to us; for few have acted, nearly all of us have thought.

My own vanity would be unwilling to enter upon incidents which had their origin either in folly or in error. It is true that those follies and errors have ceased, but their effects remain. With years our *faults* diminish, but our *vices* increase.

You know that my mother was Spanish, and that my father was one of that old race of which so few scions remain, who, living in a distant country, have been little influenced by the changes of fashion, and priding themselves on the antiquity of their names, have looked with contempt upon the modern distinctions and the mushroom noblesse which have sprung up to discountenance and eclipse the plainness of more venerable and solid respectability. In his youth my father had served in the army. He had known much of men and more of books; but his knowledge, instead of rooting out, had rather been engrafted on his prejudices. He was one of that class (and I say it with a private reverence, though a public regret,) who, with the best intentions, have made the worst citizens, and who think it a duty to perpetuate whatever is pernicious by having learnt to consider it as sacred. He was a great country gentleman, a great sportsman, and a great Tory; perhaps the three worst enemies which a country can have. Though beneficent to the poor, he gave but a cold reception to the rich; for he was too refined to associate with his inferiors, and too proud to like the competition of his equals. One ball and two dinners a-year constituted all the aristocratic portion of our hospitality, and at the age

of twelve, the noblest and youngest companions that I possessed, were a large Danish dog and a wild mountain pony, as unbroken and as lawless as myself. It is only in later years that we can perceive the immeasurable importance of the early scenes and circumstances which surround us. It was in the loneliness of my unchecked wanderings that my early affection for my own thoughts was conceived. In the seclusion of Nature—in whatever court she presided—the education of my mind was begun; and, even at that early age, I rejoiced (like the wild hart the Grecian poet* has described) in the stillness of the great woods, and the solitudes unbroken by human footsteps.

The first change in my life was under melancholy auspices: my father fell suddenly ill, and died; and my mother, whose very existence seemed only held in his presence, followed him in three months. I remember that, a few hours before her death, she called me to her: she reminded me that, through her, I was of Spanish extraction; that in her country I received my birth, and that, not the less for its degradation and distress, I might hereafter find in the relations which I held to it a remembrance to value, or even a duty to fulfil. On her tenderness to me at that hour, on the impression it made upon my mind, and on the keen and enduring sorrow which I felt for months after her death, it would be useless to dwell.

My uncle became my guardian. He is, you know, a member of parliament of some reputation; very sensible and very dull; very much respected by men, very much disliked by women; and inspiring all children, of either sex, with the same unmitigated aversion which he feels for them himself.

I did not remain long under his immediate care. I was soon sent to school—that preparatory world, where the great primal principles of human nature, in the aggression of the strong and the meanness of the weak, constitute the earliest lesson of importance that we are taught; and where the forced *primitiæ* of that less universal knowledge which is useless to the many, who, in after life, neglect, and bitter to the few who improve it, are the first motives for which our minds are to be broken to terror, and our hearts initiated into tears.

Bold and resolute by temper, I soon carved myself a sort of career among my as-

* Eurip. Bacchæ, l. 874.

sociates. A hatred to all oppression, and a haughty and unyielding character, made me at once the fear and aversion of the greater powers and principalities of the school; while my agility at all boyish games, and my ready assistance or protection to every one who required it, made me proportionally popular with, and courted by, the humbler multitude of the subordinate classes. I was constantly surrounded by the most lawless and mischievous followers whom the school could afford; all eager for my commands, and all pledged to their execution.

In good truth, I was a worthy Roland of such a gang: though I excelled in, I cared little for, the ordinary amusements of the school: I was fonder of engaging in marauding expeditions contrary to our legislative restrictions, and I valued myself equally upon my boldness in planning our exploits, and my dexterity in eluding their discovery. But exactly in proportion as our school-terms connected me with those of my own years, did our vacations unfit me for any intimate companionship but that which I already began to discover in myself.

Twice in the year, when I went home, it was to that wild and romantic part of the country where my former childhood had been spent. There, alone and unchecked, I was thrown utterly upon my own resources. I wandered, by day, over the rude scenes which surrounded us; at evening I pored, with an unwearied delight, over the ancient legends which made those scenes sacred to my imagination. I grew by degrees of a more thoughtful and visionary nature. My temper imbibed the romance of my studies; and whether, in winter, basking by the large hearth of our old hall, or stretched, in the indolent voluptuousness of summer, by the rushing streams which formed the chief characteristic of the county around us, my hours were equally wasted in those dim and luxurious dreams, which constituted, perhaps, the essence of that poetry I had not the genius to embody. It was then, by that alternate restlessness of action and idleness of reflection, into which my young years were divided, that the impress of my character was stamped: that fitfulness of temper, that affection for extremes has accompanied me through life. Hence, not only all intermediums of emotion appear to me as tame, but even the most overwrought excitation can bring neither novelty nor

zest. I have, as it were, feasted upon the passions; I have made that my daily food, which, in its strength and excess would have been poison to others; I have rendered my mind unable to enjoy the ordinary aliments of nature; and I have wasted, by a premature indulgence, my resources and my powers, till I have left my heart, without a remedy or a hope, to whatever disorder its own intemperance has engendered.

From the same to the same.

When I left Dr. ——'s I was sent to a private tutor in D——e. Here I continued for about two years. It was during that time that —but what *then* befel me is for no living ear! The characters of that history are engraven on my heart in letters of fire; but it is a language that none but myself have the authority to read. It is enough for the purpose of my confessions that the events of that period were connected with the first awakening of the most powerful of human passions, and that, whatever their commencement, their end was despair! and *she*—the object of that love—the only being in the world who ever possessed the secret and the spell of my nature—*her* life was the bitterness and the fever of a troubled heart,—her rest is the grave—

Non la conobbe il mondo mentre l' ebbe
Con ibill 'io, ch 'a pianger qui rimasi.

That attachment was not so much a single event as the first link in a long chain which was coiled around my heart. It were a tedious and bitter history, even were it permitted, to tell you of all the sins and misfortunes to which in after-life that passion was connected. I will only speak of the more hidden but general effect it had upon my mind; though, indeed, naturally inclined to a morbid and melancholy philosophy, it is more than probable, but for that occurrence, that it would never have found matter for excitement. Thrown early among mankind, I should early have imbibed their feelings, and grown like them by the influence of custom. I should not have carried within me one unceasing remembrance, which was to teach me, like Faustus, to find nothing in knowledge but its inutility, or in hope but its deceit; and to bear like him, through the blessings of youth and the allurements of pleasure, the curse and the presence of a fiend.

From the same to the same.

It was after the first violent grief produced by that train of circumstances to which I must necessarily so darkly allude, that I began to apply with earnestness to books. Night and day I devoted myself unceasingly to study, and from this fit I was only recovered by the long and dangerous illness it produced. Alas! there is no fool like him who wishes for knowledge! It is only through woe that we are taught to reflect, and we gather the honey of worldly wisdom, not from flowers, but thorns.

"Une grande passion malheureuse est un grand moyen de sagesse." From the moment in which the buoyancy of my spirit was first broken by real anguish, the losses of the *heart* were repaired by the experience of the *mind*. I passed at once, like Melmoth, from youth to age. What were any longer to me the ordinary avocations of my contemporaries? I had exhausted years in moments—I had wasted, like the Eastern Queen, my richest jewel in a draught. I ceased to hope, to feel, to act, to burn: such are the impulses of the young! I learned to doubt, to reason, to analyse: such are the habits of the old! From that time, if I have not avoided the pleasures of life, I have not enjoyed them. Women, wine, the society of the gay, the commune of the wise, the lonely pursuit of knowledge, the daring visions of ambition, all have occnpied me in turn, and all alike have deceived me; but like the Widow in the story of Voltaire, I have built at last a temple to "Time, the Comforter." I have grown calm and unrepining with years; and, if I am now shrinking from men, I have derived at least this advantage from the loneliness first made habitual by regret:—that while I feel increased benevolence to others, I have learned to look for happiness only in myself.

They alone are independent of Fortune who have made themselves a separate existence from the world.

From the same to the same.

I went to the University with a great fund of general reading, and habits of constant application. My uncle, who having no children of his own, began to be ambitious for me, formed great expectations of my career at Oxford. I stayed there three years, and did nothing! I did not gain a

single prize, nor did I attempt any thing above the most ordinary degree. The fact is, that nothing seemed to me worth the labour of success. I conversed with those who had obtained the highest academical reputation, and I smiled with a consciousness of superiority at the boundlessness of their vanity, and the narrowness of their views. The limits of the distinction they had gained seemed to them as wide as the most extended renown; and the little knowledge their youth had acquired only appeared to them an excuse for the ignorance and the indolence of maturer years. Was it to equal these that I was to labour? I felt that I already surpassed them. Was it to gain *their* good opinion, or, still worse, that of their admirers? Alas! I had too long learned to live for myself to find any happiness in the respect of the idlers I despised.

I left Oxford at the age of twenty-one. I succeeded to the large estates of my inheritance, and for the first time I felt the vanity so natural to youth when I went up to London to enjoy the resources of the Capital, and to display the powers I possessed to revel in whatever those resources could yield. I found society like the Jewish temple: any one is admitted into its threshold; none but the chiefs of the institution into its recesses.

Young, rich, of an ancient and honourable name, pursuing pleasure rather as a necessary excitement than an occasional occupation, and agreeable to the associates I drew around me because my profusion contributed to their enjoyment, and my temper to their amusement—I found myself courted by many, and avoided by none. I soon discovered that all civility is but the mask of design. I smiled at the kindness of the fathers who, hearing that I was talented, and knowing that I was rich, looked to my support in whatever political side they had espoused. I saw in the notes of the mothers their anxiety for the establishment of their daughters, and their respect for my acres; and in the cordiality of the sons who had horses to sell, and rouge-et-noir debts to pay, I detected all that veneration for my money which implied such contempt for its possessor. By nature observant, and by misfortune sarcastic, I looked upon the various colourings of society with a searching and philosophic eye; I unravelled the intricacies which knit servility with arrogance, and meanness with ostentation; and

I traced to its sources that universal vulgarity of inward sentiment and external manner, which, in all classes, appears to me to constitute the only unvarying characteristic of our countrymen. In proportion as I increased my knowledge of others, I shrunk with a deeper disappointment and dejection into my own resources. The first moment of real happiness which I experienced for a whole year was when I found myself about to seek, beneath the influence of other skies, that more extended acquaintance with my species which might either draw me to them with a closer connection, or at least reconcile me to the ties which already existed.

I will not dwell upon my adventures abroad; there is little to interest others in a recital which awakens no interest in oneself. I sought for wisdom, and I acquired but knowledge. I thirsted for the truth, the tenderness of love, and I found but its fever and its falsehood. Like the two Florimels of Spenser, I mistook, in my delirium, the delusive fabrication of the senses for the divine reality of the heart; and I only awoke from my deceit when the phantom I had worshipped melted into snow. Whatever I pursued partook of the energy, yet fitfulness of my nature; mingling to-day in the tumults of the city, and to-morrow alone with my own heart in the solitude of unpeopled nature; now revelling in the wildest excesses, and now tracing, with a painful and unwearied search, the intricacies of science; alternately governing others, and subdued by the tyranny which my own passions imposed—I passed through the ordeal unshrinking, yet not unscathed. "The education of life," says De Stael, "perfects the thinking mind, but depraves the frivolous." I do not inquire, Monkton, to which of these classes I belong; but I feel too well, that though my mind has not been depraved, it has found no perfection but in misfortune; and that whatever be the acquirements of later years, they have nothing which can compensate for the losses of our youth.

From the Same to the Same.

I RETURNED to England. I entered again upon the theatre of its world; but I mixed now more in its greater than its lesser pursuits. I looked rather at the mass

than the leaven of mankind; and while I felt aversion for the few whom I knew, I glowed with philanthropy for the crowd which I knew not.

It is in contemplating men at a distance that we become benevolent. When we mix with them, we suffer by the contact, and grow, if not malicious from the injury, at least selfish from the circumspection which our safety imposes: but when, while we feel our relationship, we are not galled by the tie; when neither jealousy, nor envy, nor resentment are excited, we have nothing to interfere with those more complacent and kindly sentiments which our earliest impressions have rendered natural to our hearts. We may fly men in hatred because they have galled us, but the feeling ceases with the cause: none will willingly feed long upon bitter thoughts. It is thus that, while in the narrow circle in which we move we suffer daily from those who approach us, we can, in spite of our resentment to *them*, glow with a general benevolence to the wider relations from which we are remote; that while smarting beneath the treachery of friendship, the sting of ingratitude, the faithlessness of love, we would almost sacrifice our lives to realize some idolized theory of legislation; and that, distrustful, calculating, selfish in private, there are thousands who would, with a credulous fanaticism, fling themselves as victims before that unrecompensing Moloch which they term the Public.

Living, then, much by myself, but reflecting much upon the world, I learned to love mankind. Philanthropy brought ambition, for I was ambitious, not for my own aggrandizement, but for the service of others —for the poor—the toiling —the degraded: these constituted that part of my fellow beings which I the most loved, for these were bound to me by the most engaging of all human ties—misfortune! I began to enter into the intrigues of the state; I extended my observation and inquiry from individuals to nations; I examined into the mysteries of the science which has arisen in these later days to give the lie to the wisdom of the past, to reduce into the simplicity of problems the intricacies of political knowledge, to teach us the fallacy of the system which had governed by restriction, and imagined that the happiness of nations depended upon the perpetual interference of its rulers; and to prove to us that the only unerring

policy of art is to leave a free and unobstructed progress to the hidden energies and providence of Nature. But it was not only the *theoretical* investigation of the state which employed me. I mixed, though in secret, with the agents of its springs. While I seemed only intent upon pleasure, I locked in my heart the consciousness and vanity of power. In the levity of the lip I disguised the workings and the knowledge of the brain; and I looked, as with a gifted eye, upon the mysteries of the hidden depths, while I seemed to float an idler, with the herd, only on the surface of the stream.

Why was I disgusted, when I had but to put forth my hand and grasp whatever object my ambition might desire? Alas! there was in my heart always something too soft for the aims and cravings of my mind. I felt that I was wasting the young years of my life in a barren and wearisome pursuit. What to me, who had outlived vanity, would have been the admiration of the crowd? I sighed for the sympathy of *the one!* and I shrunk in sadness from the prospect of renown to ask my heart for the reality of love! For what purpose, too, had I devoted myself to the service of men? As I grew more sensible of the labour of pursuing, I saw more of the inutility of accomplishing, individual measures. There is one great and moving order of events which we may retard, but we cannot arrest, and to which, if we endeavour to hasten them, we only give a dangerous and unnatural impetus. Often, when in the fever of the midnight, I have paused from my unshared and unsoftened studies, to listen to the deadly pulsation of my heart,* when I have felt in its painful and tumultuous beating the very life waning and wasting within me, I have sickened to my inmost soul to remember that, amongst all those whom I was exhausting the health and enjoyment of youth to benefit, there was not one for whom my life had an interest, or by whom my death would be honoured by a tear. There is a beautiful passage in Chalmers on the want of sympathy we experienoe in the world. From my earliest childhood I had one deep, engrossing, yearning desire,—and that was to love and to be loved. I found, too young, the realization of that dream—it past! and I have never known it again. The experience of long and bitter

* Falkland suffered much, from very early youth, from a complaint in his heart.

years teaches me to look with suspicion on that far recollection of the past, and to doubt if this earth could indeed produce a living form to satisfy the visions of one who has dwelt among the boyish creations of fancy—who has shaped out in his heart an imaginary idol, arrayed it in whatever is most beautiful in nature, and breathed into the image the pure but burning spirit of that innate love from which it sprung! It is true that my manhood has been the undeceiver of my youth, and that the meditation upon facts has disenthralled me from the visionary broodings over fiction; but what remuneration have I found in reality? If the line of the satirist be not true, "Souvent de tous nos maux la raison est le pire,"*—at least, like the madman of whom he speaks, I owe but little gratitude to the act which, "in drawing me from my error, has robbed me also of a paradise."

I am approaching the conclusion of my confessions. Men who have no ties in the world, and who have been accustomed to solitude, find, with every disappointment in the former, a greater yearning for the enjoyments which the latter can afford. Day by day I relapsed more into myself; "man delighted me not, nor woman either." In my ambition, it was not in the means, but the end that I was disappointed. In my friends, I complained not of treachery, but insipidity; and it was not because I was deserted, but wearied by more tender connexions, that I ceased to find either excitement in seeking, or triumph in obtaining, their love. It was not, then, in a momentary disgust, but rather in the calm of satiety, that I formed that resolution of retirement which I have adopted now.

Shrinking from my kind, but too young to live wholly for myself, I have made a new tie with nature; I have come to cement it here. I am like a bird which has wandered afar, but has returned home to its nest at last. But there is one feeling which had its origin in the world, and which accompanies me still; which consecrates my recollections of the past; which contributes to take its gloom from the solitude of the present:—Do you ask me its nature, Monkton? It is my friendship for you.

* Boileau.

From the same to the same.

I WISH that I could convey to you, dear Monkton, the faintest idea of the pleasures of indolence. You belong to that class which is of all the most busy, though the least active. Men of pleasure never have time for anything. No lawyer, no statesman, no bustling, hurrying, restless underling of the counter or the Exchange, is so eternally occupied as a lounger "about town." He is linked to labour by a series of undefinable nothings. His independence and idleness only serve to fetter and engross him, and his leisure seems held upon the condition of never having a moment to himself. Would that you could see me at this instant in the luxury of my summer retreat, surrounded by the trees, the waters, the wild birds, and the hum, the glow, the exultation which teem visibly and audibly through creation in the noon of a summer's day! I am undisturbed by a single intruder. I am unoccupied by a single pursuit. I suffer one moment to glide into another, without the remembrance that the next must be filled up by some laborious pleasure, or some wearisome enjoyment. It is here that I feel all the powers, and gather together all the resources of my mind. I recall my recollections of men; and, unbiassed by the passions and prejudices which we do not experience *alone*, because their very existence depends upon others, I endeavour to perfect my knowledge of the human heart. He who would acquire that better science must arrange and analyse in private the experience he has collected in the crowd. Alas, Monkton, when you have expressed surprise at the gloom which is so habitual to my temper, did it never occur to you that my acquaintance with the world would alone be sufficient to account for it?—that knowledge is neither for the good nor the happy. Who can touch pitch, and not be defiled? Who can look upon the workings of grief and rejoice, or associate with guilt and be pure?

It has been by mingling with men, not only in their *haunts* but their *emotions*, that I have learned to know them. I have descended into the receptacles of vice; I have taken lessons from the brothel and the hell; I have watched feeling in its unguarded sallies, and drawn from the impulse of the moment conclusions which gave the lie to the previous conduct of years. But all knowledge brings us

disappointment, and *this* knowledge the most—the satiety of good, the suspicion of evil, the decay of our young dreams, the premature iciness of age, the reckless, aimless, joyless indifference which follows an overwrought and feverish excitation—*These* constitute the lot of men who have renounced *hope* in the acquisition of *thought*, and who, in learning the motives of human actions, learn only to despise the persons and the things which enchanted them like divinities before.

From the same to the same.

I TOLD you, dear Monkton, in my first letter, of my favourite retreat in Mr. Mandeville's grounds. I have grown so attached to it, that I spend the greater part of the day there. I am not one of those persons who always perambulate with a book in their hands, as if neither nature nor their own reflections could afford them any rational amusement. I go there more frequently *en paresseux* than *en savant;* a small brooklet which runs through the grounds, broadens at last into a deep, clear, transparent lake. Here fir, and elm, and oak fling their branches over the margin; and beneath their shade I pass all the hours of noonday in the luxuries of a dreamer's reverie. It is true, however, that I am never less idle than when I appear the most so. I am like Prospero in his desert island, and surround myself with spirits. A spell trembles upon the leaves; every wave comes fraught to me with its peculiar music; and an Ariel seems to whisper the secrets of every breeze, which comes to my forehead laden with the perfumes of the West. But do not think, Monkton, that it is only good spirits which haunt the recesses of my solitude. To push the metaphor to exaggeration—Memory is my Sycorax, and Gloom is the Caliban she conceives. But let me digress from myself to my less idle occupations:—I have of late diverted my thoughts in some measure by a recurrence to a study to which I once was particularly devoted—history. Have you ever remarked, that people who live the most by themselves, reflect the most upon others; and that he who lives surrounded by the million, never thinks of any but the one individual—himself? Philosophers—moralists—historians, whose thoughts, labours, lives, have been devoted to the conside-

ration of mankind, or the analysis of public events, have usually been remarkably attached to solitude and seclusion. We are indeed so linked to our fellow-beings, that, where we are not chained to them by action, we are carried to and connected with them by thought.

I have just quitted the observations of my favorite Bolingbroke upon history. I cannot agree with him as to its utility. The more I consider, the more I am convinced that its study has been upon the whole pernicious to mankind. It is by those details, which are always as unfair in their inference as they must evidently be doubtful in their facts, that party animosity and general prejudice are supported and sustained. There is not one abuse—one intolerance—one remnant of ancient barbarity and ignorance existing at the present day, which is not advocated, and actually confirmed by some vague deduction from the bigotry of an illiterate chronicler, or the obscurity of an uncertain legend. It is through the constant appeal to our ancestors that we transmit wretchedness and wrong to our posterity: we should require to corroborate an evil originating in the present day, the clearest and most satisfactory proof; but the minutest defence is sufficient for an evil handed down to us by the barbarism of antiquity. We reason from what even in old times was dubious, as if we were adducing what was certain in those in which we live.—An thus we have made no sanction to abuses so powerful as history, and no enemy to the present like the past.

From the Lady Emily Mandeville to Mrs. St. John.

At last, my dear Julia, I am settled in my beautiful retreat. Mrs. Dalton and Lady Margaret Leslie are all whom I could prevail upon to accompany me. Mr. Mandeville is full of the corn-laws. He is chosen chairman to a select committee in the House. He is murmuring agricultural distresses in his sleep; and when I asked him occasionally to come down here to see me, he started from a reverie, and exclaimed—"Never, Mr. Speaker, as a landed proprietor; never will I consent to my own ruin,"

My boy, my own, my beautiful companion, is with me. I wish you could see how fast he can run, and how sensibly he can talk.—"What a fine figure he has

for his age!" said I to Mr. Mandeville the other day; "Figure! age!" said his father; "in the House of Commons he shall make a figure to every age." I know that in writing to you, you will not be contented if I do not say a great deal about myself. I shall therefore proceed to tell you, that I feel already much better from the air and exercise of the journey, from the conversation of my two guests, and above all, from the constant society of my dear boy. He was three last birth-day. I think that at the age of twenty-one, I am the least childish of the two.—Pray remember me to all in town who have not quite forgotten me. Beg Lady ——, to send Elizabeth a subscription ticket for Almack's, and—oh talking of Almack's, I think my boy's eyes are even more blue and beautiful than Lady C——'s.

Adieu, my dear Julia,
Ever, &c.,
E. M.

Lady Emily Mandeville was the daughter of the Duke of Lindvale. She married, at the age of sixteen, a man of large fortune, and some parliamentary reputation. Neither in person nor in character was he much beneath or above the ordinary standard of men. He was one of Nature's Macadamized achievements. His great fault was his equality; and you longed for a hill though it were to climb, or a stone though it were in your way. Love attaches itself to something prominent, even if that something be what others would hate. One can scarcely feel extremes for mediocrity. The few years Lady Emily had been married, had but little altered her character. Quick in feeling, though regulated in temper; gay, less from levity, than from that first *spring tide*, of a heart which has never yet known occasion to be sad; beautiful and pure, as an enthusiast's dream of heaven, yet bearing within the latent and powerful passion and tenderness of earth; she mixed with all a simplicity and innocence which the extreme earliness of her marriage, and the ascetic temper of her husband, had tended less to diminish than increase. She had much of what is termed genius—its warmth of emotion—its vividness of conception—its admiration for the grand—its affection for the good, and that dangerous contempt for whatever is mean and worthless, the very indulgence of which is an offence against the habits of the world. Her tastes were, however, too feminine and chaste ever to render her

eccentric: they were rather calculated to conceal, than to publish the deeper recesses of her nature; and it was beneath that polished surface of manner common to those with whom she mixed, that she hid the treasures of a mine which no human eye had beheld.

Her health, naturally delicate, had lately suffered much from the dissipation of London, and it was by the advice of her physicians that she had now come to spend the summer at E——. Lady Margaret Leslie, who was old enough to be tired with the caprices of society, and Mrs. Dalton, who, having just lost her husband, was forbidden at present to partake of its amusements, had agreed to accompany her to her retreat. Neither of them was perhaps much suited to Emily's temper, but youth and spirits make almost any one congenial to us: it is from the years which confirm our habits, and the reflections which refine our taste, that it becomes easy to revolt us, and difficult to please.

On the third day after Emily's arrival at E——, she was sitting after breakfast with Lady Margaret and Mrs. Dalton. "Pray," said the former, "did you ever meet my relation, Mr. Falkland? he is in your immediate neighbourhood." "Never; though I have a great curiosity: that fine old ruin beyond the village belongs to him, I believe." "It does: you ought to know him: you would like him so!" "Like him?" repeated Mrs. Dalton, who was one of those persons of *ton* who, though every thing collectively, are nothing individually;—"Like him? impossible!" "Why," said Lady Margaret, indignantly, "he has every requisite to please—youth, talent, fascination of manner, and great knowledge of the world." "Well," said Mrs. Dalton, "I cannot say I discovered his perfections. He seemed to me conceited and satirical, and—and—in short, very disagreeable; *but then, to be sure, I have only seen him once.*" "I have heard many accounts of him," said Emily, "all differing from each other: I think, however, that the generality of people rather incline to Mrs. Dalton's opinion than to yours, Lady Margaret." "I can easily believe it. It is very seldom that he takes the trouble to please; but when he does, he is irresistible. Very little, however, is generally known respecting him. Since he came of age, he has been much abroad; and when in England, he never entered with eagerness into society. He is supposed to possess very ex-

traordinary powers, which, added to his large fortune and ancient name, have procured him a consideration and rank rarely enjoyed by one so young. He has refused repeated offers to enter into public life; but he is very intimate with one of the ministers, who it is said, has had the address to profit much by his abilities. All other particulars concerning him are extremely uncertain. Of his person and manners you had better judge yourself; for I am sure, Emily, that my petition for inviting him here is already granted." "By all means," said Emily: "you cannot be more anxious to see him than I am." And so the conversation dropped. Lady Margaret went to the library; Mrs. Dalton seated herself on the ottoman, dividing her attention between the last novel and her Italian greyhound; and Emily left the room in order to revisit her former and favourite haunts. Her young son was her companion, and she was not sorry that he was her only one. To be the instructress of an infant, a mother should be its playmate; and Emily was, perhaps, wiser than she imagined, when she ran with a laughing eye and a light foot over the grass, occupying herself almost with the same earnestness as her child in the same infantine amusements. As they passed the wood which led to the lake at the bottom of the grounds, the boy, who was before Emily, suddenly stopped. She came hastily up to him; and scarcely two paces before, though halt hid by the steep bank of the lake beneath which he reclined, she saw a man apparently asleep. A volume ot Shakspeare lay beside him: the child had seized it. As she took it from him in order to replace it, her eye rested upon the passage the boy had accidentally opened. How often in after days was that passage recalled as an omen! it was the following:—

Ah me! for aught that ever I could
read,
Could ever hear by tale or history—
The course of true love never did run
smooth!
Midsummer Night's Dream.

As she laid the book gently down, she caught a glimpse of the countenance of the sleeper: never did she forget the expression which it wore,—stern, proud, mournful even in repose!

She did not wait for him to awake. She hurried home through the trees. All that day she was silent and abstracted; the face haunted her like a dream. Strange as it may seem, she spoke neither to Lady Mar-

garet's nor to Mrs. Dalton of her adventure. *Why?* Is there in our hearts any prescience of their misfortune?

On the next day, Falkland, who had received and accepted Lady Margaret's invitation, was expected to dinner. Emily felt a strong yet excusable curiosity to see one of whom she had heard so many and such contradictory reports. She was alone in the saloon when he entered. At the first glance she recognized the person she had met by the lake on the day before, and she blushed deeply as she replied to his salutation. To her great relief Lady Margaret and Mrs. Dalton entered in a few minutes, and the conversation grew general.

Falkland had but little of what is called animation in manner; but his wit, though it rarely led to mirth, was sarcastic yet refined, and the vividness of his imagination threw a brilliancy and originality over remarks which in others might have been commonplace and tame.

The conversation turned chiefly upon society; and though Lady Margaret had told her he had entered but little into its ordinary routine, Emily was struck alike by his accurate acquaintance with men, and the justice of his reflections upon manners. There also mingled with his satire an occasional melancholy of feeling, which appeared to Emily the more touching because it was always unexpected and unassumed. It was after one of these remarks, that for the first time she ventured to examine into the charm and peculiarity of the countenance of the speaker.—There was spread over it that expression of mingled energy and languor, which betokens that much, whether of thought, sorrow, passion, or action, has been undergone, but resisted, has wearied, but not subdued. In the broad and noble brow, in the chiselled lip, and the melancholy depths of the calm and thoughtful eye, there sat a resolution and a power, which, though mournful, were not without their pride; which, if they had borne the worst, had also defied it. Notwithstanding his mother's country, his complexion was fair and pale; and his hair, of a light chestnut, fell in large *antique* curls over his forehead.—That forehead, indeed, constituted the principal feature of his countenance. It was neither in its height nor expansion alone that its remarkable beauty consisted; but if ever thought to conceive, and courage to exe-

cute high designs were embodied and visible, they were imprinted *there*.

Falkland did not stay long after dinner; but to Lady Margaret he promised all that she required of future length and frequency in his visits. When he left the room, Lady Emily went instinctively to the window to watch him depart; and all that night his low soft voice rung in her ear, like the music of an indistinct and half-remembered dream.

From Mr. Mandeville to Lady Emily.

DEAR EMILY,

BUSINESS of great importance to the country has prevented my writing to you before. I hope you have continued well since I heard from you last, and that you do all you can to preserve that retrenchment of unnecessary expenses, and observe that attention to a prudent economy, which is no less incumbent upon individuals than nations.

Thinking that you must be dull at E——, and ever anxious both to entertain and to improve you, I send you an excellent publication by Mr. Tooke,* together with my own two last speeches, corrected by myself.

Trusting to hear from you soon, I am, with best love to Henry,

Very affectionately
yours,
JOHN MANDEVILLE.

*From Erasmus Falkland, Esq., to the Hon. Frederick Monkton.**

WELL, Monkton, I have been to E——; that important event in my monastic life has been concluded. Lady Margaret was as talkative as usual; and a Mrs. Dalton, who, I find, is an acquaintance of yours, asked very tenderly after your poodle and yourself. But Lady Emily! Aye, Monkton, I know not well how to describe *her* to you. Her beauty interests not less than it dazzles. There is that deep and eloquent softness in her every word and action, which, of all charms, is the most dangerous. Yet she is rather of a playful than of the melancholy and pensive nature which generally accompanies such gentleness of manner; but there is no levity in her character; nor

* The Political Economist?

* A letter from Falkland, mentioning Lady Margaret's invitation has been omitted.

is that playfulness of spirit ever carried into the exhilaration of what we call "mirth." She seems, if I may use the antithesis, at once too feeling to be gay, and too innocent to be sad. I remember having frequently met her husband. Cold and pompous, without any thing to interest the imagination, or engage the affections, I am not able to conceive a person less congenial to his beautiful and romantic wife. But she must have been exceedingly young when she married him; and she, probably, knows not yet that she is to be pitied because she has not yet learned that she can love.

Le veggio in fronte amor come in suo seggio
Sul crin, negli occhi—su le labra amore
Sol d'intorno al suo cuore amore non veggio.

I have been twice to her house since my first admission there. I love to listen to that soft and enchanting voice, and to escape from the gloom of my own reflections to the brightness, yet simplicity, of hers. In my earlier days this comfort would have been attended with danger; but we grow callous from the excess of feeling. We cannot re-illumine ashes! I can gaze upon her dream-like beauty, and not experience a single desire which can sully the purity of my worship. I listen to her voice when it melts in endearment over her birds, her flowers, or in a deeper devotion, over her child; but my heart does not thrill at the tenderness of the sound. I touch her hand, and the pulses of my own are as calm as before. Satiety of the past is our best safeguard from the temptations of the future; and the perils of youth are over when it has acquired that dullness and apathy of affection which should belong only to the insensibility of age.

Such were Falkland's opinions at the time he wrote. Ah! what is so delusive as our affections? Our security is our danger—our defiance our defeat! Day after day he went to E——. He passed the mornings in making excursions with Emily over that wild and romantic country by which they were surrounded; and in the dangerous but delicious stillness of the summer twilights, they listened to the first whispers of their hearts.

In his relationship to Lady Margaret, Falkland found his excuse for the frequency of his visits; and even Mrs. Dalton was so charmed with the fascination of his manner, that (in spite of her previous

dislike) she forgot to inquire how far his intimacy at E—— was at variance with the proprieties of the world she worshipped, or in what proportion it was connected with herself.

It is needless for me to trace through all its windings the formation of that affection, the subsequent records of which I am about to relate. What is so unearthly, so beautiful, as the first birth of a woman's love? The air of heaven not purer in its wanderings —its sunshine not more holy in its warmth. Oh! why should it deteriorate in its nature, even while it increases in its degree? Why should the step which *prints*, *sully* also the snow? How often, when Falkland met that guiltless, yet thrilling eye, which revealed to him those internal secrets that Emily was yet awhile too happy to discover; when, like a fountain among flowers, the goodness of her heart flowed over the softness of her manner to those around her, and the benevolence of her actions to those beneath; how often he turned away with a veneraration too deep for the selfishness of human passion, and a tenderness too sacred for its desires! It was in this temper (the earliest and the most fruitless prognostic of real love) that the following letter was written:—

From Erasmus Falkland, Esq., to the Hon. Frederick Monkton.

I have had two or three admonitory letters from my uncle. "The summer (he says) is advancing, yet you remain stationary in your indolence. There is still a great part of Europe which you have not seen; and since you will neither enter society for a wife, nor the House of Commons for fame, spend your life, at least while it is yet free and unshackled, in those active pursuits which will render idleness hereafter more sweet; or in that observation and enjoyment among others, which will increase your resources in yourself." All this sounds well; but I have already acquired more knowledge than will be of use either to others or myself, and I am not willing to lose *tranquillity* here for the chance of obtaining *pleasure* elsewhere. Pleasure is indeed a holyday sensation which does not occur in ordinary life. We lose the peace of years when we hunt after the rapture of moments.

I do not know if you ever felt that existence was ebbing away without being put to its full value; as for me, I am never conscious of life

without being also conscious that it is not enjoyed to the utmost. This is a bitter feeling, and its worst bitterness is our ignorance how to remove it. My indolence I neither seek nor wish to defend, yet it is rather from necessity than choice: it seems to me that there is nothing in the world to arouse me. I only ask for action, but I can find no motive sufficient to excite it; let me then, in my indolence, not, like the world, be idle, yet dependent on others; but at least dignify the failing by some appearance of that freedom which retirement only can bestow.

My seclusion is no longer solitude; yet I do not value it the less. I spend a great portion of my time at E——. Loneliness is attractive to men of reflection, not so much because they like their own thoughts, as because they dislike the thoughts of others. Solitude ceases to charm the moment we can find a single being whose ideas are more agreeable to us than our own. I have not, I think, yet described to you the person of Lady Emily. She is tall, and slightly, yet beautifully, formed. The ill health which obliged her to leave London for E——, in the height of the season, has given her cheek a more delicate hue than I should think it naturally wore. Her eyes are light, but their lashes are long and dark; her hair is black and luxuriant, and worn in a fashion peculiar to herself; but her manners, Monkton! how can I convey to you their fascination? so simple, and therefore so faultless—so modest, and yet so tender—she seems, in acquiring the intelligence of the woman, to have only perfected the purity of the child: and now, after all that I have said, I am more deeply sensible of the truth of Bacon's observation, that "the best part of beauty is that which no picture can express." I am loth to finish this description, because it seems to me scarcely begun; I am unwilling to continue it, because every word seems to show me more clearly those recesses of my heart, which I would have hidden even from myself. I do not *yet* love, it is true, for the time is past when I was lightly moved to passion; but I will not incur that danger, the probability of which I am seer enough to foresee. Never shall that pure and innocent heart be sullied by one who would die to shield it from the lightest misfortune. I find in myself a powerful seconder to my uncle's wishes.

I shall be in London next week; till then farewell.

E. F.

When the proverb said, that "Jove laughs at lovers' vows," it meant not (as in the ordinary construction) a sarcasm on their insincerity, but *inconsistency*. We deceive others far less than we deceive ourselves. What to Falkland were resolutions which a word, a glance, could overthrow? In the world he might have dissipated his thoughts: in loneliness he concentred them; for the passions are like the sounds of Nature, only heard in her solitude! He lulled his soul to the reproaches of his conscience; he surrendered himself to the intoxication of so golden a dream; and amidst those beautiful scenes there arose, as an offering to the summer heaven, the incense of two hearts which had, through those very fires, so guilty in themselves, purified and ennobled every other emotion they had conceived.

> God made the country, and man made the town,

says the hackneyed quotation; and the feelings awakened in each differ with the genius of the place. Who can compare the frittered and divided affections formed in cities with that which crowds cannot distract by opposing temptations, or dissipation infect with its frivolities?

I have often thought that had the execution of Attila equalled its design, no human work could have surpassed it in its grandeur. What picture is more simple, though more sublime, than the vast solitude of an unpeopled wilderness, the woods, the mountains, the face of nature, cast in the fresh, yet giant mould of a new and unpolluted world; and, amidst those most silent and mighty temples of THE GREAT GOD, the lone spirit of Love reigning and brightening over all?

FALKLAND.

BOOK II.

It is dangerous for women, however wise it be for men, "to commune with their own hearts, and to be still!" Continuing to pursue the follies of the world had been to Emily more prudent than to fly them; to pause, to separate herself from the herd, was to discover, to feel, to murmur at the vacuum of her being; and to occupy it with the feelings which it craved, could in her be but the hoarding a provision for despair.

Married, before she had begun the bitter knowledge of *herself*, to a man whom it was impossible to love, yet deriving from nature a tenderness of soul, which shed itself over every thing around, her only escape from misery had been in the dormancy of feeling. The birth of her son had opened to her a new field of sensations, and she drew the best charm of her own existence *from* the life she had given to another. Had she not met Falkland, all the deeper sources of affection would have flowed into one only and legitimate channel; but those whom *he* wished to fascinate had never resisted his power, and the attachment he inspired was in proportion to the strength and ardour of his own nature.

It was not for Emily Mandeville to love such as Falkland without feeling that from that moment a separate and selfish existence had ceased *to be*. Our senses may captivate us with beauty; but in absence we forget, or by reason we can conquer, so superficial an impression. Our vanity may enamour us with rank; but the affections of vanity are traced in sand: but who can love *Genius*, and not feel that the sentiments it excites partake of its own intenseness and its own immortality? It arouses, concentrates, engrosses all our emotions, even to the most subtle and concealed. Love what is common, and ordinary objects can replace or destroy a sentiment which an ordinary object has awakened. Love what we shall not meet

again amidst the littleness and insipidity which surround us, and where can we turn for a new object to replace that which has no parallel upon earth? The recovery from such delirium is like the return from a fairy land; and still fresh in the recollections of a bright and immortal clime, how can we endure the dulness of that human existence to which for the future we are condemned?

It was some weeks since Emily had written to Mrs. St. John; and her last letter, in mentioning Falkland, had spoken of him with a reserve which rather alarmed than deceived her friend. Mrs. St. John had indeed a strong and secret reason for fear. Falkland had been the object of her own and her earliest attachment, and she knew well the singular and mysterious power which he exercised at will over the mind. He had, it is true, never returned, nor even known of, her feelings towards him; and during the years which had elapsed since she last saw him, and in the new scenes which her marriage with Mr. St. John had opened, she had almost forgotten her early attachment, when Lady Emily's letter renewed its remembrance. She wrote in answer an impassioned and affectionate caution to her friend. She spoke much (after complaining of Emily's late silence) in condemnation of the character of Falkland, and in warning of its fascinations; and she attempted to arouse alike the virtue and the pride which so often triumph in alliance, when separately they would so easily fail. In this Mrs. St. John probably imagined she was actuated solely by friendship; but in the best actions there is always some latent evil in the motive; and the selfishness of a jealousy, though hopeless not conquered, perhaps predominated over the less interested feelings which were all that she acknowledged to herself.

In this work, it has been my object to portray the progress of the passions; to chronicle a history rather by thoughts and feelings than by incidents and events; and to lay open those minuter and more subtle mazes and secrets of the human heart, which in modern writings have been so sparingly exposed. It is with this view that I have from time to time broken the thread of narration, in order to bring forward more vividly the characters it contains; and in laying no claim to the ordinary ambition of tale writers, I have deemed myself at liberty to deviate from the ordinary courses they

pursue. Hence the motive and the excuse for the insertion of the following extracts, and of occasional letters. They portray the interior struggle when Narration would look only to the external event, and trace the lightning "home to its cloud," when History would only mark the spot where it scorched or destroyed.

Extracts from the Journal of Lady Emily Mandeville.

Tuesday.—More than seven years have passed since I began this journal! I have just been looking over it from the commencement.—Many and various are the feelings which it attempts to describe,—anger, pique, joy, sorrow, hope, pleasure, weariness, ennui; but never, never once humiliation or remorse!—these were not doomed to be my portion in the bright years of my earliest youth. How shall I describe them now? I have received—I have read, as well as my tears would let me, a long letter from Julia. It is true that I have not dared to write to her: when shall I answer this? She has shown me the state of my heart; I more than suspected it before. Could I have dreamed two months—six weeks since—that I should have a single feeling of which I could be ashamed? *He* has just been here—*He*—the only one in the world, for all the world seems concentred in him.—He observed my distress, for I looked on him; and my lips quivered, and my eyes were full of tears. He came to me—he sat next to me—he whispered his interest, his anxiety—and was this all? Have I loved before I ever knew that I was beloved? No, no; the tongue was silent, but the eye, the cheek, the manner—alas! *these* have been but too eloquent!

Wednesday.—It was so sweet to listen to his low and tender voice; to watch the expression of his countenance—even to breathe the air he inhaled. But now that I know its cause, I feel that this pleasure is a crime, and I am miserable even when he is with me. He has not been here to-day. It is past three. Will he come? I rise from my seat—I go to the window for breath—I am restless, agitated, disturbed. Lady Margaret speaks to me—I scarcely answer her. My boy ———yes, my dear, dear Henry comes, and I feel that I am again a mother. Never will I betray that duty, though I have forgotten one as sacred though less dear!

Never shall my son have cause to blush for his parent! I will fly hence—I will see *him* no more!

From Erasmus Falkland Esq., to the Hon. Frederick Monkton.

WRITE to me Monkton—exhort me, admonish me, or forsake me forever. I am happy, yet wretched: I wander in the delirium of a fatal fever, in which I see dreams of a brighter life, but every one of them only brings me nearer to death. Day after day I have lingered here, until weeks have flown—and for what? Emily is not like the women of the world—virtue, honour, faith, are not to her the mere *convenances* of society.—"There is no crime," said Lady A. "where there is concealment." Such can never be the creed of Emily Mandeville. She will not disguise guilt either in the levity of the world, or in the affectations of sentiment. She will be wretched, and forever. *I* hold the destinies of her future life, and yet I am base enough to hesitate whether to save or destroy her. Oh! how fearful, how selfish, how degrading is unlawful love!

You know my theoretical benevolence for every thing that lives; you have often smiled at its vanity. I see now that you were right; for it seems to me almost superhuman virtue not to destroy the person who is dearest to me even on earth.

I remember writing to you some weeks since that I would come to London.—Little did I know of the weakness of my own mind. I told her that I intended to depart. She turned pale—she trembled, but she did not speak. Those signs which should have hastened my departure have taken away the strength even to think of it.

I am here still! I go to E—— every day. Sometimes we sit in silence; I dare not trust myself to speak. How dangerous are such moments! *Ammutiscon lingue parlen l'alme.*

Yesterday they left us alone. We had been conversing with Lady Margaret on indifferent subjects.—There was a pause for some minutes. I looked up; Lady Margaret had left the room. The blood rushed into my cheek—my eyes met Emily's; I would have given worlds to have repeated with my lips what those eyes expressed. I could not even speak—I felt choked with contending emotions. There was not a breath stir-

ring; I heard my very heart beat. A thunderbolt would have been a relief. Oh God! if there be a curse, it is to burn, swell, madden with feelings which you are doomed to conceal! This is, indeed, to be "a cannibal of one's own heart."*

It was sunset. Emily was alone upon the lawn which sloped towards the lake, and the blue still waters beneath broke, at bright intervals, through the scattered and illuminated trees. She stood watching the sun sink with wistful and tearful eyes. Her soul was sad within her. The ivy which love first wreathes around his work had already faded away, and she now only saw the desolation of the ruin it concealed. Never more for her was that freshness of unawakened feeling which invests all things with a perpetual day-break of sunshine, and incense, and dew. The heart may survive the decay or rupture of an innocent and lawful affection—"la marque reste, mais la blessure guerit"—but the love of darkness and guilt is branded in a character ineffaceable—eternal! The one is, like lightning, more likely to dazzle than to destroy, and, divine even in its danger, it *makes holy what it sears*;†

* Bacon.

† According to the ancient superstition.

but the other is like that sure and deadly fire which fell upon the cities of old, graving in the barrenness of the desert it had wrought the record and perpetuation of a curse. A low and thrilling voice stole upon Emily's ear. She turned—Falkland stood beside her. "I felt restless and unhappy," he said, "and I came to seek you. If (writes one of the fathers) a guilty and wretched man could behold, though only for a few minutes, the countenance of an angel, the calm and glory which it wears would so sink into his heart, that he would pass at once over the gulf of gone years into his first unsullied state of purity and hope: perhaps I thought of that sentence when I came to you." "I know not," said Emily, with a deep blush at this address, which formed her only answer to the compliment it conveyed; "I know not why it is, but to me there is always something melancholy in this hour—something mournful in seeing the beautiful day die with all its pomp and music, its sunshine and songs of birds."

"And yet," replied Falkland, "if I remember the time when my feelings were more in unison with yours, (for at present external objects have lost for me much of their influence and attrac-

tion) the melancholy you perceive has in it a vague and ineffable sweetness not to be exchanged for more exhilarated spirits. The melancholy which arises from no cause within ourselves is like music—it enchants us in proportion to its effect upon our feelings.

Perhaps, its chief charm (though this it requires the contamination of after years before we can fathom and define) is in the purity of the sources it springs from. Our feelings can be but little sullied and worn while they can yet respond to the passionless and primal sympathies of nature; and the sadness you speak of is so void of bitterness, so allied to the best and most delicious sensations we enjoy, that I should imagine the *very happiness of Heaven partook rather of melancholy than mirth.*"

There was a pause of some moments. It was rarely that Falkland alluded even so slightly to the futurity of another world; and when he did, it was never in a careless and common-place manner, but in a tone which sank deep into Emily's heart. "Look," she said, at length, "at that beautiful star! the first and brightest! I have often thought it was like the promise of life beyond the tomb—a pledge to us that even in the depths of midnight, the earth shall have a light, unquenched and unquenchable, from Heaven!"

Emily turned to Falkland as she said this, and her countenance sparkled with the enthusiasm she felt. But *his* face was deadly pale. There went over it, like a cloud, an expression of changeful and unutterable thought; and then passing suddenly away, it left his features calm and bright in all their noble and intellectual beauty. Her soul yearned to him, as she looked, with the tenderness of a sister.

They walked slowly towards the house. "I have frequently," said Emily with some hesitation, "been surprised at the little enthusiasm you appear to possess even upon subjects where your conviction must be strong." "*I have thought enthusiasm away!*" replied Falkland: "it was the loss of hope which brought me reflection, and in reflection I forgot to feel. Would that I had not found it so easy to recall what I thought I had lost forever!"

Falkland's cheek changed as he said this, and Emily sighed faintly, for she felt his meaning. In him that allusion to his love had aroused a whole train of dangerous recollections; for Passion is the avalanche of

the human heart—*a single breath can dissolve it from its repose.*

They remained silent; for Falkland would not trust himself to speak, till, when they reached the house, he faltered out his excuses for not entering, and departed. He turned towards his solitary home. The grounds at E —— had been laid out in a classical and costly manner, which contrasted forcibly with the wild and simple nature of the surrounding scenery. Even the short distance between Mr. Mandeville's house and L—— wrought as distinct a change in the character of the country as any length of space could have effected. Falkland's ancient and ruinous abode, with its shattered arches and moss-grown parapets, was situated on a gentle declivity, and surrounded by dark elm and larch trees. It still retained some traces both of its former consequence, and of the perils to which that consequence had exposed it. A broad ditch, overgrown with weeds, indicated the remains of what once had been a moat; and huge rough stones, scattered around it, spoke of the outworks the fortification had anciently possessed, and the stout resistance they had made in "the Parliament Wars" to the sturdy followers of Ireton and Fairfax. The moon, that flatterer of decay, shed its rich and softening beauty over a spot which else had been desolate and cheerless, and kissed into light the long and unwaving herbage which rose at intervals from the ruins, like the false parasites of fallen greatness. But for Falkland the scene had no interest or charm, and he turned with a careless and unheeding eye to his customary apartment. It was the only one in the house furnished with luxury, or even comfort. Large book-cases inlaid with curious carvings in ivory; busts of the few public characters the world had ever produced worthy, in Falkland's estimation, of the homage of posterity; elaborately wrought hangings from Flemish looms; and French fauteuils and sofas of rich damask, and massy gilding, (relics of the magnificent day of Louis Quatorze)—bespoke a costliness of design suited rather to Falkland's wealth than to the ordinary simplicity of his tastes.

A large writing-table was overspread with books in various languages, and upon the most opposite subjects. Letters and papers were scattered amongst them; Falkland turned carelessly over the latter. One of the epistolary communications was from Lord —— the

——. He smiled bitterly, as he read the exaggerated compliments it contained and saw to the bottom of the shallow artifice they were meant to conceal. He tossed the letter from him, and opened the scattered volumes one after another with that languid and sated feeling common to all men who have read deeply enough to feel how much they have learned, and how little they know. "We pass our lives," thought he, "in sowing what we are never to reap! We endeavor to erect a tower, which shall reach the heavens, in order to escape one curse; and lo! we are smitten by another! We would soar from a common evil, and from that moment *we are divided by a separate language from our race!* Learning, science, philosophy, the world of men and of imagination I ransacked,—and for what? I centred my happiness in wisdom. I looked upon the aims of others with a scornful and loathing eye. I held commune with those who have gone before me; I dwelt among the monuments of their minds, and made their records familiar to me as friends: I penetrated the womb of nature, and went with the secret elements to their home: I arranged the stars before me, and learned the method and the mystery of their courses: I asked the tempest its bourn, and questioned the winds of their path. This was not sufficient to satisfy my thirst for knowledge, and I searched in this lower world for new sources to content it. Unseen and unsuspected. I saw and agitated the springs of the automaton that we call 'the Mind.' I found a clew for the labyrinth of human motives, and I surveyed the hearts of those around me as through a glass. Vanity of vanities! What have I acquired? I have separated myself from my kind, but not from those worst enemies, my passions! I have made a solitude of my soul, but I have not mocked it with the appellation of Peace.* In flying the herd, I have not escaped from myself; like the wounded deer, the barb was within me, and *that* I could not fly!" With these thoughts he turned from his reverie, and once more endeavoured to charm his own reflections by those which ought to speak to us of quiet, for they are graven on the pages of the dead; but his attempts were as idle as before. His thoughts were still wandering and confused, and could neither be

* "Solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant."—Tacitus.

"They make a solitude, and call it Peace."—Byron.

quieted nor collected: he read, but he scarcely distinguished one page from another: he wrote—the ideas refused to flow at his call; and the only effert at connecting his feelings which even partially succeeded, was in the verses which I am about to place before the reader. It is a common property of poetry, however imperfectly the gift be possessed, to speak to the hearts of others in proportion as the sentiments it would express are felt in our own; and I subjoin the lines which bear the date of that evening, in the hope that, more than many pages, they will show the morbid yet original character of the writer, and the particular sources of feeling from which they took the bitterness that pervades them:—

KNOWLEDGE.

Ergo hominum genus incassum frustraque laborat
Semper, et in curis consumit inanibus ævum.
LUCRET.

'Tis midnight! Round the lamp which o'er
My chamber sheds its lonely beam,
Is widely spread the varied lore
Which feeds in youth our feverish dream—

The dream—the thirst—the wild desire,
Delirious yet divine—*to know;*
Around to roam—above aspire—
And drink the breath of Heaven below!

From Ocean—Earth—the Stars—the Sky
To lift mysterious Nature's pall;
And bare before the kindling eye
In MAN the darkest mist of all!

Alas! what boots the midnight oil?
The madness of the struggling mind?
Oh, vague the hope, and vain the toil,
Which only leave us doubly blind!

What learn we from the Past?—the same
Dull course of glory, guilt, and gloom:
I ask'd the Future, and there came
No voice from its unfathom'd womb.

The Sun was silent, and the Wave
The Air but answer'd with its breath;
But Earth was kind; and from the grave
Arose the eternal answer—*Death!*

And *this* was all! We need no sage
To teach us Nature's only truth!
O fools! o'er Wisdom's idle page
To waste the hours of golden youth!

In Science wildly do we seek
What only withering years should bring—
The languid pulse — the feverish cheek—
The spirits drooping on their wing!

To *think*—is but to learn to groan—
To scorn what all beside adore—
To feel amid the world alone,
An alien on a desert shore;—

To lose the only ties which seem
To idler gaze in mercy given!—
To find love, faith, and hope, a dream,
And turn to dark despair from heaven!

* * * *

I pass on to a wilder period of my history. The passion, as yet only revealed by the eye, was now to be recorded by the lip; and the scene, which witnessed the first confession of the lovers, was worthy of the last conclusion of their loves!

E—— was about twelve miles from a celebrated cliff on the sea-shore, and Lady Margaret had long proposed an excursion to a spot, curious alike for its natural scenery and the legends attached to it. A day was at length fixed for accomplishing this plan. Falkland was of the party. In searching for something in the pockets of the carriage, his hand met Emily's, and involuntarily pressed it. She withdrew it hastily, but he felt it tremble. He did not dare to look up: that single contact had given him a new life: intoxicated with the most delicious sensations, he leaned back in silence. A fever had entered his veins —the thrill of the touch had gone like fire into his system—all his frame seemed one nerve.

Lady Margaret talked of the weather and the prospect, wondered how far they had got, and animadverted on the roads, till at last, like a child, she talked herself to rest. Mrs. Dalton read "Guy Mannering" but neither Emily nor her lover had any occupation or thought in common with their companions; silent and absorbed, they were only alive to the vivid existence of the present. Constantly engaged as we are in looking behind us or before, if there be one hour in which we feel only the time being —in which we feel sensibly that we live, and that those moments of the present are full of the enjoyment, the rapture of existence—it is when we are with the *one* person whose life and spirits have become the great part and principle of our own. They reached their destination—a small inn close by the shore. They rested there a short time, and then strolled along the sands towards the cliff. Since Falkland had known Emily, her character was much altered. Six weeks before the time I write of, and in playfulness and lightness of spirits she was almost a child: now those indications of an unawakened heart had mellowed into a tenderness full of that melancholy so touching and holy, even amid the voluptuous softness which it breathes and inspires. But this day, whether from that coquetry so common to all women, or from some cause more natural to *her*, she seemed gayer than Falkland ever remembered to have seen her.

She ran over the sands, picking up shells, and tempting the waves with her small and fairy feet, not daring to look at him, and yet speaking to him at times with a quick tone of levity which hurt and offended him, even though he knew the depth of those feelings she could not disguise either from him or from herself. By degrees his answers and remarks grew cold and sarcastic. Emily affected pique; and when it was discovered that the cliff was still nearly two miles off, she refused to proceed any farther. Lady Margaret talked her at last into consent, and they walked on as sullenly as an English party of pleasure possibly could do, till they were within three quarters of a mile of the place, when Emily declared she was so tired that she really could not go on. Falkland looked at her, perhaps, with no very amiable expression of countenance, when he perceived that she seemed really pale and fatigued: and when she caught his eyes, tears rushed into her own.

"Indeed, indeed, Mr. Falkland," said she, eagerly, "this is *not* affectation. I am very tired; but rather than prevent your amusement, I will endeavour to go on." "Nonsense, child," said Lady Margaret, "you *do* seem tired. Mrs. Dalton and Falkland shall go to the rock, and I'll stay here with you." This proposition, however, Lady Emily (who knew Lady Margaret's wish to see the rock) would not hear of; she insisted upon staying by herself. "Nobody will run away with me; and I can very easy amuse myself with picking up shells till you come back." After a long remonstrance, which produced no effect, this plan was at last acceded to. With great reluctance Falkland set off with his two companions; but after the first step, he turned to look back. He caught her eye, and felt from that moment that their reconciliation was sealed. They arrived, at last, at the cliff. Its height, its excavations, the romantic interest which the traditions respecting it had inspired, fully repaid the two women for the fatigue of their walk. As for Falkland, he was unconscious of every thing around him; he was full of "sweet and bitter thoughts." In vain the man whom they found loitering there, in order to serve as a guide, kept dinning in his ear, stories of the marvellous, and exclamations of the sublime. The first words which aroused him were these—"It's lucky, please your Honour, that you have just saved the tide. It is but last week that three

poor people were drowned in attempting to come here; as it is, you will have to go home round the cliff." Falkland started: he felt his heart stand still. "Good God!" cried Lady Margaret, "what will become of Emily?"

They were at that instant in one of the caverns, where they had already been loitering too long. Falkland rushed out to the sands. The tide was hurrying in with a deep sound, which came on his soul like a knell. He looked back towards the way they had come: not one hunded yards distant, and the waters had already covered the path! An eternity would scarcely atone for the horror of that moment! One great characteristic of Falkland was, his presence of mind. He turned to the man who stood beside him—he gave him a cool and exact description of the spot where he had left Emily. He told him to repair with all possible speed to his home—to launch his boat—to row it to the place he had described. "Be quick," he added, "and you *must* be in time: if you are, you shall never know poverty again." The next moment he was already several yards from the spot. He run, or rather flew, till he was stopped by the waters. He rushed in; they were over a hollow between two rocks—they were already up to his chest. "There is yet hope," thought he, when he had passed the spot, and saw the smooth sand before him. For some minutes he was scarcely sensible of existence; and then he found himself breathless at *her* feet. Beyond, towards T ——, (the small inn I spoke of,) the waves had already reached the foot of the rocks, and precluded all hope of return. Their only chance was the possibility that the waters had not yet rendered impassable the hollow through which Falkland had just waded. He scarcely spoke; at least, he was totally unconscious of what he said. He hurried her on breathless and trembling, with the sound of the booming waters ringing in his ear, and their billows advancing to his very feet. They arrived at the hollow; a single glance sufficed to show him that their solitary hope was past! The waters, before up to his chest, had swelled considerably; he could not swim. He saw in that instant that they were girt with a hastening and terrible death. Can it be believed that with that certainty ceased his fear? He looked in the pale but calm countenance of her who clung to him, and a strange

tranquillity, even mingled with joy, possessed him. Her breath was on his cheek —her form was reclining on his own—his hand clasped hers; if they were to die, it was thus. What could life afford to him more dear? "It is in this moment," said he, and he knelt as he spoke, "that I dare tell you what otherwise my lips never should have revealed. I love—I adore you! Turn not away from me thus. In life our persons were severed; if our hearts are united in death, then death will be sweet." She turned—*her cheek was no longer pale!* He rose—he clasped her to his bosom: his lips pressed hers. Oh! that long, deep, burning pressure!—youth, love, life, soul, all concentrated in that one kiss! Yet the same cause which occasioned the avowal, hallowed also the madness of his heart. What had the passion, declared only at the approach of death, with the more earthly desires of life? They looked to heaven—it was calm and unclouded: the evening lay there in its balm and perfume, and the air was less agitated than their sighs. They turned towards the beautiful sea which was to be their grave: the wild birds flew over it exultingly; the far vessels seemed "rejoicing to run their course." All was full of the breath, the glory, the life of nature; and in how many minutes was all to be as *nothing!* Their existence would resemble the ships that have gone down at sea in the very smile of the element that destroyed them. They looked into each other's eyes, and they drew still nearer together. Their hearts, in safety apart, mingled in peril and became one. Minutes rolled on, and the great waves came dashing round them. They stood on the loftiest eminence they could reach. The spray broke over their feet: the billows rose—rose—they were speechless. He thought he heard her heart beat, but her lip trembled not. A speck—a boat! "Look up, Emily! look up! See how it cuts the waters. Nearer—nearer! but a little longer, and we are safe. It is but a few yards off—it approaches—it touches the rock!" Ah! what to them henceforth was the value of life, when the moment of discovering its charm became also the date of its misfortunes, and when the death they had escaped was the only method of cementing their union without consummating their guilt?

From Erasmus Falkland, Esq., to the Hon. Frederick Monkton.

I WILL write to you at length to-morrow. Events have occurred to alter, perhaps, the whole complexion of the future. I am now going to Emily to propose to her to fly. We are not *les gens du monde*, who are ruined by the loss of public opinion. She has felt that I can be to her far more than the world; and as for me, what would I not forfeit for one touch of her hand?

Extracts from the Journal of Lady Emily Mandeville.

Friday.—Since I wrote yesterday in these pages the narrative of our escape, I have done nothing but think over those moments, too dangerous because too dear; but at last I have steeled my heart—I have yielded to my own weakness too long—I shudder at the abyss from which I have escaped. I can yet fly. He will come here to-day—he shall receive my farewell.

Saturday morning, four o'clock.—I have sat in this room alone since eleven o'clock. I cannot give vent to my feelings; they seem as if crushed by some load from which it is impossible to rise. "*He is gone, and forever!*" I sit repeating those words to myself, scarcely conscious of their meaning. Alas! when to-morrow comes, and the next day, and the next, and yet I see him not, I shall awaken, indeed, to all the agony of my loss! He came here—he saw me alone—he implored me to fly. I did not dare to meet his eyes; I hardened my heart against his voice. I knew the part I was to take—I have adopted it; but what struggles, what misery, has it not occasioned me! Who could have thought it had been so hard to be virtuous! His eloquence drove me from one defence to another, and then I had none but *his* mercy. I opened my heart—I showed him its weakness—I implored his forbearance. My tears, my anguish, convinced him of my sincerity. We have parted in bitterness, but, thank Heaven, not in guilt! He has entreated permission to write to me. How could I refuse him? Yet I may not—cannot—write to him again! How *could* I, indeed, suffer my heart to pour forth its feelings in reply? for would there be one word of regret, or one term of endearment, which my inmost soul would not echo?

Sunday.—Yes, *that day*,

but I must not think of this; my very religion I dare not indulge. Oh God! how wretched I am! His visit was always the great æra in the day; it employed all my hopes till he came, and all *my memory* when he was gone. I sit now and look at the place he used to fill, till I feel the tears rolling silently down my cheek; they come without an effort—they depart without relief.

Monday.—Henry asked me where Mr. Falkland was gone; I stooped down to hide my confusion. When shall I hear from him? To-morrow? Oh that it were come! I have placed the clock before me, and I actually count the minutes. He left a book here; it is a volume of "Melmoth." I have read over every word of it, and whenever I have come to a pencil-mark by him, I have paused to dream over that varying and eloquent countenance, the soft low tone of that tender voice, till the book has fallen from my hands, and I have started to find the utterness of my desolation!

From Erasmus Falkland, Esq., to Lady Emily Mandeville.

——*Hotel, London.*

For the first time in my life I write to you! How my hand trembles—how my cheek flushes! a thousand thousand thoughts rush upon me, and almost suffocate me with the variety and confusion of the emotions they awaken! I am agitated alike with the rapture of writing to you, and with the impossibility of expressing the feelings which I cannot distinctly unravel even to myself. You love me, Emily, and yet I have fled from you, and at your command; but the thought that, though absent, I am not forgotten, supports me through all.

It was with a feverish sense of weariness and pain that I found myself entering this vast reservoir of human vices. I became at once sensible of the sterility of that polluted soil so incapable of nurturing affection, and I clasped your image the closer to my heart. It is you, who, when I was most weary of existence, gifted me with a new life. You breathed into me a part of your own spirit; my soul feels that influence, and becomes more sacred. I have shut myself from the idlers who would molest me; I have built a temple in my heart: I have set within it a divinity; and the vanities of the world shall not profane the spot which has been consecrated to *you*. Our parting, Emily,—do you re-

call it? Your hand clasped in mine; your cheek resting, though but for an instant, on my bosom: and the tears which love called forth, but which virtue purified even at their source. Never were hearts so near, yet so divided; never was there an hour so tender, yet so unaccompanied with danger. Passion, grief, madness, all sank beneath your voice, and lay hushed like a deep sea within my soul! "Tu abbia veduto il leone ammansarsi alla sola tua voce."*

I tore myself from you; I hurried through the wood; I stood by the lake, on whose banks I had so often wandered with you; I bared my breast to the winds; I bathed my temples with the waters. Fool that I was! the fever, the fever was within! But it is not thus, my adored and beautiful friend, that I should console and support you. Even as I write, passion melts into tenderness, and pours itself in softness, over your remembrance. The virtue so gentle, yet so strong; the feelings so kind, yet so holy; the tears which wept over the decision your lips proclaimed—these are the recollections which come over me like dew. Let your own heart, my Emily, be your reward; and know that your lover only forgets that he *adores*, to remember that he *respects* you!

* Ultime lettere di Jacopo Ortis.

From the Same to the Same.

—— Park.

I could not bear the tumult and noise of London. I sighed for solitude, that I might muse over your remembrance undisturbed. I came here yesterday. It is the home of my childhood. I am surrounded on all sides by the scenes and images consecrated by the fresh recollections of my unsullied years. *They* are not changed. The seasons which come and depart renew in them the havoc which they make. If the December destroys, the April revives; but man has but one spring, and the desolation of the heart but one winter! In this very room have I sat and brooded over dreams and hopes which — but no matter — those dreams could never show me a vision to equal *you*, or those hopes hold out to me a blessing so precious as your love.

Do you remember, or rather can you ever forget, that moment in which the great depths of our souls were revealed? Ah! not in the scene in which such vows should have been whispered to your ear, and your

tenderness have blushed its reply. The passion concealed in darkness was revealed in danger; and the love, which in life was forbidden, was our comfort amidst the terrors of death! And that long and holy kiss, the first, the only moment in which our lips shared the union of our souls!—do not tell me that it is wrong to recall it!—do not tell me that I sin, when I own to you the hours I sit alone, and nurse the delirium of that voluptuous remembrance. The feelings you have excited may render me wretched, but not guilty; for the love of *you* can only *hallow* the heart—it is a fire which consecrates the altar on which it burns. I feel, even from the hour that I loved, that my soul has become more pure. I could not have believed that *I* was capable of so unearthly an affection, or that the love of woman could possess that divinity of virtue which I worship in yours. The world is no fosterer of our young visions of purity and passion: embarked in its pursuits, and acquainted with its pleasures, while the latter sated me with what is evil, the former made me incredulous to what is pure. I considered your sex as a problem which my experience had already solved. Like the French philosophers, who lose truth by endeavouring to condense it, and who forfeit the m*oral* from their regard to the *maxim*, I concentrated my knowledge of women into aphorisms and antitheses; and I did not dream of the exceptions, if I did not find myself deceived in the general conclusion. I confess that I erred: I renounce from this moment the colder reflections of my manhood,—the fruits of a bitter experience,—the wisdom of an inquiring, yet agitated life. I return with transport to my earliest visions of beauty and love; and I dedicate them upon the altar of my soul to you, who have embodied, and concentrated and breathed them into life!

Extracts from the Journal of Lady Emily Mandeville.

Monday.—This is the most joyless day in the whole week; for it can bring me no letter from him. I rise listlessly, and read over again and again the last letter I received from him—useless task! it is graven in my heart! I long only for the day to be over, because to-morrow I may, perhaps, hear from him again. When I wake at night from my disturbed and broken

sleep, I look if the morning is near; not because it gives light and life, but because it may bring tidings of him. When his letter is brought to me, I keep it for minutes unopened—I feed my eyes on the hand-writing—I examine the seal—I press it with my kisses, before I indulge myself in the luxury of reading it. I then place it in my bosom, and take it thence only to read it again and again,—to moisten it with my tears of gratitude and love, and, alas! of penitence and remorse! What can be the end of this affection? I dare neither to hope that it may continue, or that it may cease; in either case I am wretched for ever!

Monday night, twelve o'clock.—They observe my paleness; the tears which tremble in my eyes; the listlessness and dejection of my manner. I think Mrs. Dalton guesses the cause. Humbled and debased in my own mind, I fly, Falkland, for refuge to you! Your affection cannot raise me to my former state, but it can reconcile—no—not reconcile, but support me in my present. This dear letter, I kiss it again—oh! that to-morrow were come!

Tuesday.—Another letter—so kind, so tender, so encouraging: would that I deserved his praises! alas! I sin even in reading them. I know that I ought to struggle more against my feelings—*once* I attempted it; I prayed to Heaven to support me; I put away from me every thing that could recall him to my mind—for three days I would not open his letters. I could then resist no longer; and my weakness became the more confirmed from the feebleness of the struggle. I remember one day that he told us of a beautiful passage in one of the ancients, in which the bitterest curse against the wicked is, that they may see virtue, but not be able to obtain it;*—*that* punishment is mine!

Wednesday.—My boy has been with me: I see him now from the windows gathering the field-flowers, and running after every butterfly which comes across him. Formerly he made all my delight and occupation; now he is even dearer to me than ever; but he no longer engrosses all my thoughts. I turn over the leaves of this journal: once it noted down the little occurrences of the day; it marks nothing now but the monotony of sadness. *He* is not here—*he* cannot come. What event then *could* I notice?

* Persius.

*From Erasmus Falkland, Esq. to Lady Emily Mandeville.**

——*Park.*

If you knew how I long, how I thirst for one word from you—one word to say you are well, and have not forgotten me!—but I will not distress you. You will guess my feelings, and do justice to the restraint I impose on them, when I make no effort to alter your resolution not to write. I know that it is just, and I bow to my sentence; but can you blame me if I am restless, and if I repine? It is past twelve. I always write to you at night. It is then, my own love, that my imagination can the more readily transport me to you; it is then that my spirit holds with you a more tender and undivided commune. In the day the world can force itself upon my thoughts, and its trifles usurp the place which "I love to keep for only thee and Heaven;" but in the night all things recall you the more vividly: the stillness of the gentle skies,—the blandness of the unbroken air,—the stars, so holy in their loveliness,—all speak and breathe to me of you. I think your hand is clasped in mine; that I again drink the low music of your voice, and imbibe again in the air the breath which has been perfumed by your lips. You seem to stand in my lonely chamber in the light and stillness of a spirit, who has wandered on earth to teach us the love which is felt in heaven.

I cannot, believe me, I cannot endure this separation long; it must be more or less. You must be mine for ever, or our parting must be without a mitigation, which is rather a cruelty than a relief. If you will not accompany me, I will leave this country alone. I must not wean myself from your image by degrees, but break from the enchantment at once. And when, Emily, I am once more upon the world, when no tidings of my fate shall reach your ear, and all its power of alienation be left to the progress of time—then, when you will at last have forgotten me, when your peace of mind will be restored, and having no struggles of conscience to undergo, you will have no remorse to endure; —then, Emily, when we are indeed divided, let the scene which has witnessed our passion, the letters which have recorded my vow, the evil we have suffered, and the temptation we have overcome; let these, in our old age be remembered, and in declaring to heaven that we

* Most of the letters from Falkland to Lady E. Mandeville I have thought expedient to suppress.

were innocent, add also—*that we loved.*

From Don Alphonso D'Aguilar to Don —— ——.

London.

Our cause gains ground daily. The great, indeed the only ostensible object of my mission is nearly fulfilled; but I have another charge and attraction which I am now about to explain to you. You know that my acquaintance with the English language and country arose from my sister's marriage with Mr. Falkland. After the birth of their only child I accompanied them to England: I remained with them for three years, and I still consider those days among the whitest in my restless and agitated career. I returned to Spain; I became engaged in the troubles and dissensions which distracted my unhappy country. Years rolled on, *how* I need not mention to *you.* One night they put a letter in my hands: it was from my sister; it was written on her death-bed. Her husband had died suddenly. She loved him as a Spanish woman loves, and she could not survive his loss. Her letter to me spoke of her country and her son. Amidst the new ties she had formed in England, she had never forgotten the land of her fathers. "I have already," she said, "taught my boy to remember that he has two countries; that the one, prosperous and free, may afford him his pleasures; that the other, struggling and debased, demands from him his duties. If, when he has attained the age in which you can judge of his character, he is respectable only from his rank, and valuable only from his wealth; if neither his head nor his heart will make him useful to *our* cause, suffer him to remain undisturbed in his prosperity *here:* but if, as I presage, he becomes worthy of the blood which he bears in his veins, then I conjure you, my brother, to remind him that he has been sworn by me on my death-bed to the most sacred of earthly altars."

Some months since, when I arrived in England, before I ventured to find him out in person, I resolved to inquire into his character.—Had he been as the young and rich generally are—had dissipation become habitual to him, and frivolity grown around him as a second nature, then I should have acquiesced in the former injunction of my sister much more willingly than I now shall obey the latter. I

find that he is perfectly acquainted with our language, that he has placed a large sum in our funds, and that from the general liberality of his sentiments he is as likely to espouse, as (in that case) he would be certain, from his high reputation for talent, to serve, our cause. I am, therefore, upon the eve of seeking him out. I understand that he is living in perfect retirement, in the county of ——, in the immediate neighbourhood of Mr. Mandeville, an Englishman of considerable fortune, and warmly attached to our cause.

Mr. Mandeville has invited me to accompany him down to this estate for some days, and I am too anxious to see my nephew not to accept eagerly of the invitation. If I can persuade Falkland to aid us, it will be by the influence of his name, his talents, and his wealth. It is not of him that we can ask the stern and laborious devotion to which we have consecrated ourselves. The perfidy of friends, the vigilance of foes, the rashness of the bold, the cowardice of the wavering; strife in the closet, treachery in the senate, death in the field; *these* constitute the fate we have pledged ourselves to bear.—Little can any, who do not endure it, imagine of the life to which those who share the contests of an agitated and distracted country are doomed; but if they know not our griefs, neither can they dream of our consolation. We move, like the delineation of Faith, over a barren and desert soil: the rock, and the thorn, and the stings of the adder are round our feet; but we clasp a crucifix to our hearts for our comfort, and we fix our eyes upon the heavens for our hope!

Extracts from the Journal of Lady Emily Mandeville.

Wednesday.—His letters have taken a different tone: instead of soothing, they add to my distress; but I deserve all—all that can be inflicted upon me. I have had a letter from Mr. Mandeville. He is coming down here for a few days, and intends bringing some friends with him: he mentions particularly a Spaniard—*the uncle of Mr. Falkland, whom he asks me if I have seen.*—The Spaniard is particularly anxious to meet his nephew—he does not then know that Falkland is gone. It will be some relief to see Mr. Mandeville alone; but even then how shall I meet him? What shall I say when he observes my paleness and alteration? I feel bowed to the very dust.

Thursday evening.—Mr. Mandeville has arrived: fortunately, it was late in the evening before he came, and the darkness prevented his observing my confusion and alteration. He was kinder than usual. Oh! how bitterly my heart avenged him! He brought with him the Spaniard, Don Alphonso D'Aguilar; I think there is a faint family likeness between him and Falkland. Mr. Mandeville brought also a letter from Julia. She will be here the day after to-morrow. The letter is short, but kind; she does not allude to *him:* it is some days since I heard from him.

From Erasmus Falkland, Esq., to the Hon. Frederick Monkton.

I HAVE resolved, Monkton, to go to her again! I am sure that it will be better for both of us to meet once more; perhaps, to unite for ever! None who have once loved me can easily forget me. I do not say this from vanity, because I owe it not to my being *superior* to, but *different* from others. I am sure that the remorse and affliction she feels now are far greater than she would experience, even were she more guilty, and with me. *Then*, at least, she would have some one to soothe and sympathize in whatever she might endure. To one so pure as Emily, the full crime is already incurred. It is not the innocent who insist upon that nice line of morality between the thought and the action; such distinctions require reflection, experience, deliberation, prudence of head, or coldness of heart; these are the traits not of the guileless, but the worldly. It is the *affections*, not the *person*, of a virtuous woman, which it is difficult to obtain: that difficulty is the safeguard to her chastity: that difficulty I have, in this instance, overcome. I have endeavoured to live without Emily, but in vain. Every moment of absence only taught me the impossibility. In twenty-four hours I shall see her again. I feel my pulse rise into fever at the very thought.

Farewell, Monkton. My next letter, I hope, will record my triumph.

FALKLAND.

BOOK III.

Extracts from the Journal of Lady Emily Mandeville.

Friday.—JULIA is here, and so kind! She has not mentioned *his* name, but she sighed so deeply when she saw my pale and sunken countenance, that I threw myself into her arms and cried like a child. We had no need of other explanation: those tears spoke at once my confession and my repentance. No letter from him for several days! Surely he is not ill! how miserable that thought makes me!

Saturday.—A note has just been brought me from him. He is come back—*here!* Good Heavens! how very imprudent! I am so agitated that I can write no more.

Sunday.—I have seen him! Let me repeat that sentence—*I have seen him.* Oh that moment! did it not atone for all that I have suffered? I dare not write every thing he said, but he wished me to fly with him—*him*—what happiness, yet what guilt, in the very thought! Oh! this foolish heart—would that it might break! I feel too well the sophistry of his arguments, and yet I cannot resist them. He seems to have thrown a spell over me, which precludes even the effort to escape.

Monday.—Mr. Mandeville has asked several people in the country to dine here to-morrow, and there is to be a ball in the evening. Falkland is of course invited. We shall meet then, and *how?* I have been so little accustomed to disguise my feelings that I quite tremble to meet him with so many witnesses around. Mr. Mandeville has been so harsh to me to-day; if Falkland ever looked at me so, or ever said one such word, my heart would indeed break. What is it Alfieri says about the two demons to whom he is for ever a prey? "*La mente e il cor in perpetua lite.*" Alas! at times I start from my reveries with such a keen sense of agony and shame! How, how am I fallen!

Tuesday.—He is to come here to-day, and I shall see him!

Wednesday morning. — The night is over, thank Heaven! Falkland came late to dinner: every one else was assembled. How gracefully he entered! how superior he seemed to all the crowd that stood around him! He appeared as if he were resolved to exert powers which he had disdained before. He entered into the conversation, not only with such brilliancy, but with such a blandness and courtesy of manner! There was no scorn on his lip, no haughtiness on his forehead — nothing which showed him for a moment conscious of his immeasurable superiority over every one present. After dinner, as we retired, I caught his eyes. What volumes they told!—and then I had to listen to his praises, *and say nothing.* I felt angry even in my pleasure. Who but I had a right to speak of him so well?

The ball came on: I felt languid and dispirited. Falkland did not dance. He sat himself by me—he urged me to —— O God! O God! would that I were dead!

From Erasmus Falkland, Esq. to Lady Emily Mandeville.

How are you this morning, my adored friend? You seemed pale and ill when we parted last night, and I shall be so unhappy till I hear something of you. Oh Emily, when you listened to me with those tearful and downcast looks; when I saw your bosom heave at every word which I whispered in your ear; when, as I accidentally touched your hand, I felt it tremble beneath my own; oh! was there nothing in those moments at your heart which pleaded for me more eloquently than words? Pure and holy as you are, you know not, it is true, the feelings which burn and madden in me. When you are beside me, your hand, if it trembles, is not on fire: your voice, if it is more subdued, does not falter with the emotions it dares not express: your heart is not, like mine, devoured by a parching and wasting flame: your sleep is not turned by restless and turbulent dreams from the healthful renewal, into the very consumer, of life. No, Emily! God forbid that you *should* feel the guilt, the agony which preys upon me: but, at least, in the fond and gentle tenderness of your heart, there must be a voice you find it difficult to silence.

Amidst all the fictitious ties and fascinations of art, you cannot dismiss from your bosom the unconquerable impulses of nature. What is it you fear?—you will answer, *disgrace!* But *can* you feel it, Emily, when you share it with me? Believe me that the love which is nursed through shame and sorrow is of a deeper and holier nature than that which is reared in pride, and fostered in joy. But, if not shame, it is guilt, perhaps, which you dread? Are you then so innocent *now?* The adultery of the heart is no less a crime than that of the deed; and—yet I will not deceive you—it *is* guilt to which I tempt you!—*it is* a fall from the proud eminence you hold now. I grant this, and I offer you nothing in recompense but my love. If you loved like me, you would feel that it was something of pride—of triumph—to dare all things, even crime, for the one to whom all things are as nought! As for me, I know that if a voice from Heaven told me to desert you, I would only clasp you the closer to my heart!

I tell you, my own love, that when your hand is in mine, when your head rests upon my bosom, when those soft and thrilling eyes shall be fixed upon my own, when every sigh shall be mingled with my breath, and every tear be kissed away at the very instant it rises from its source—I tell you that then you shall only feel that every pang of the past, and every fear for the future, shall be but a new link to bind us the firmer to each other. Emily, my life, my love, you cannot, if you would, desert me. Who can separate the waters which are once united, or divide the hearts which have met and mingled into one?

Since they had once more met, it will be perceived that Falkland had adopted a new tone in expressing his passion to Emily. In the book of guilt another page, branded in a deeper and more burning character, had been turned. He lost no opportunity of summoning the earthlier emotions to the support of his cause. He wooed her fancy with the golden language of poetry, and strove to arouse the latent feelings of her sex by the soft magic of his voice, and the passionate meaning it conveyed. But at times there came over him a deep and keen sentiment of remorse; and even, as his experienced and practised eye saw the moment of his triumph approach, he felt that the success he was hazarding his own soul and hers to obtain, might bring him

a momentary transport, but not a permanent happiness. There is always this difference in the love of women and of men; that in the former, when once admitted, it engrosses all the sources of thought, and excludes every object but itself; but in the latter, it is shared with all the former reflections and feelings which the past yet bequeathes us, and can neither (however powerful be its nature (constitute *the whole* of our happiness or woe. The love of man in his maturer years is not indeed so much a new emotion, as a revival and concentration of all his departed affections to others; and the deep and intense nature of Falkland's passion for Emily was linked with the recollections of whatever he had formerly cherished as tender or dear: it touched—it awoke a long chain of young and enthusiastic feelings, which arose, perhaps, the fresher from their slumber. Who, when he turns to recall his first and fondest associations; when he throws off, one by one, the layers of earth and stone which have grown and hardened over the records of the past; who has not been surprised to discover how fresh and unimpaired those buried treasures rise again upon his heart? They have been lain up in the storehouse of Time; they have not perished; their very concealment has preserved them! *We remove the lava, and the world of a gone day is before us!*

The evening of the day on which Falkland had written the above letter was rude and stormy. The various streams with which the country abounded were swellled by late rains into an unwonted rapidity and breadth; and their voices blended with the rushing sound of the winds, and the distant roll of the thunder, which began at last sullenly to subside. The whole of the scene around L—— was of that savage yet sublime character, which suited well with the wrath of the aroused elements. Dark woods, large tracts of unenclosed heath, abrupt variations of hill and vale, and a dim and broken outline beyond of uninterrupted mountains, formed the great features of that romantic country.

It was filled with the recollections of his youth, and of the wild delight which he took then in the convulsions and varieties of nature, that Falkland roamed abroad that evening. The dim shadows of years, crowded with concealed events and corroding reflections, all gathered around his mind, and the

gloom and tempest of the night came over him like the sympathy of a friend.

He passed a group of terrified peasants; they were cowering under a tree. The oldest hid his head and shuddered; but the youngest looked steadily at the lightning which played at fitful intervals over the mountain stream that rushed rapidly by their feet. Falkland stood beside them unnoticed and silent, with folded arms and a scornful lip. To him, nature, heaven, earth, had nothing for fear, and every thing for reflection. In youth, thought he, (as he contrasted the fear felt at one period of life with the indifference at another) there are so many objects to divide and distract life, that we are scarcely sensible of the collected conviction that we live. We lose the sense of what *is*, by thinking rather of what is *to be*. But the old, who have no future to expect, are more vividly alive to the present, and they feel death more, because they have a more settled and perfect impression of existence.

He left the group, and went on alone by the margin of the winding and swelling stream. "It is (said a certain philosopher) in the conflicts of Nature that man most feels his littleness." Like all general maxims, this is only partially true. The mind, which takes its first ideas from perception, must take also its tone from the character of the objects perceived. In mingling our spirits with the great elements, we partake of their sublimity; we awaken thought from the secret depths where it had lain concealed; our feelings are too excited to remain riveted to ourselves; they blend with the mighty powers which are abroad; and, as in the agitations of men, the individual arouses from himself to become a part of the crowd, so in the convulsions of nature we are equally awakened from the littleness of self, to be lost in the grandeur of the conflict by which we are surrounded.

Falkland still continued to track the stream: it wound its way through Mandeville's grounds, and broadened at last into the lake which was so consecrated to his recollections. He paused at that spot for some moments, looking carelessly over the wide expanse of waters, now dark as night, and now flashing into one mighty plane of fire beneath the coruscations of the lightning. The clouds swept on in massy columns, dark and aspiring—veiling while they rolled up to, the great heavens, like the shadows of human doubt. Oh! weak,

weak was that dogma of the philosopher! There is a *pride* in the storm which, according to his doctrine, would debase us; a stirring music in its roar; even a savage joy in its destruction: for we can exult in a defiance of its power, even while we share in its triumphs, a consciousness of a superior spirit within us to that which is around. We can mock at the fury of the elements, for they are less terrible than the passions of the heart; at the devastations of the awful skies, for they are less desolating than the wrath of man; at the convulsions of that surrounding nature which has no peril, no terror to the soul, which is more indestructible and eternal than itself. Falkland turned towards the house which contained *his* world; and as the lightning revealed at intervals the white columns of the porch, and wrapt in sheets of fire, like a spectral throng, the tall and waving trees by which it was encircled, and then as suddenly ceased, and "the jaws of darkness" devoured up the scene; he compared, with that bitter alchymy of feeling which resolves all into one crucible of thought, those alternations of light and shadow to the history of his own guilty love—that passion whose birth was of the womb of Night; shrouded in darkness, surrounded by storms, and receiving only from the angry heavens a momentary brilliance, more terrible than its customary gloom.

As he entered the saloon, Lady Margaret advanced towards him. "My dear Falkland," said she, "how good it is in you to come in such a night! We have been watching the skies till Emily grew terrified at the lightning; *formerly* it did not alarm her." And Lady Margaret turned, utterly unconscious of the reproach she had conveyed towards Emily.

Did not Falkland's look turn also to that spot? Lady Emily was sitting by the harp which Mrs. St. John appeared to be most seriously employed in tuning; her countenance was bent downwards, and burning beneath the blushes called forth by the gaze which she *felt* was upon her.

There was in Falkland's character a peculiar dislike to all outward display of less worldly emotions. He had none of the vanity most men have in conquest; he would not have had any human being know that he was loved. He was right! No altar should be so unseen and inviolable as the human heart! He saw at once and relieved the embarrassment

he had caused. With the remarkable fascination and grace of manner so peculiarly his own, he made his excuses to Lady Margaret for his disordered dress; he charmed his uncle, Don Alphonso, with a quotation from Lopez de Vega; he inquired tenderly of Mrs. Dalton touching the health of her Italian greyhound; and then—nor till then—he ventured to approach Emily, and speak to her in that soft tone, which, like a fairy language, is understood only by the person it addresses. Mrs. St. John rose and left the harp: Falkland took her seat. He bent down to whisper Emily. His long hair touched her cheek: it was still wet with the night dew. She looked up as she felt it, and met his gaze: better had it been to have lost earth than to have drunk the soul's poison from that eye when it tempted to sin.

Mrs. St. John stood at some distance; Don Alphonso was speaking to her of his nephew, and of his hopes of ultimately gaining him to the cause of his mother's country. "See you not," said Mrs. St. John, and her colour went and came, "that while he has such attractions to detain him, your hopes are in vain?" "What mean you?" replied the Spaniard; but his eye had followed the direction she had given it, and the question came only from his lips. Mrs. St. John drew him to a still remoter corner of the room, and it was in the conversation that then ensued between them that they agreed to unite for the purpose of separating Emily from her lover—"I to save my friend," said Mrs. St. John, "and you your kinsman." Thus is it with human virtue:—the fair show and the good deed without—the one eternal motive of selfishness within. During the Spaniard's visit at E——, he had seen enough of Falkland to perceive the great consequence he might, from his perfect knowledge of the Spanish language, from his singular powers, and above all, from his command of wealth, be to the cause of that party he himself had adopted. His aim, therefore, was now no longer confined to procuring Falkland's good will and aid at home: he hoped to secure his personal assistance in Spain; and he willingly coincided with Mrs. St. John in detaching his nephew from a tie so likely to detain him from that service to which Alphonso wished he should be pledged.

Mandeville had left E—— that morning: he suspected nothing of Emily's

attachment. This, on his part, was less confidence than indifference. He was one of those persons who have no existence separate from their own: his senses all turned inwards, they reproduced selfishness. Even the House of Commons was only an object of interest, because he imagined it *a part of him, not he of it.* He said, with the insect on the wheel, "Admire *our* rapidity." But did the defects of his character remove Lady Emily's guilt? No! and this, at times, was her bitterest conviction. Whoever turns to these pages for an apology for sin will be mistaken. They contain the burning records of its sufferings, its repentance, and its doom. If there be one crime in the history of woman worse than another, it is adultery. It is, in fact, the only crime to which, in ordinary life she is exposed. Man has a thousand temptations to sin—woman has but one: if she cannot resist it, she has no claim upon our mercy. The heavens are just! her own guilt is her punishment! Should these pages, at this moment, meet the eyes of one who has become the centre of a circle of disgrace—the contaminator of her house—the dishonourer of her children,—no matter what the excuse for her crime—no matter what the exchange of her station—in the very arms of her lover, in the very cincture of the new ties which she has chosen,—I call upon her to answer me if the fondest moments of rapture are free from humiliation, though they have forgotten remorse; and if the passion itself of her lover has not become no less the penalty than the recompense of her guilt? But at that hour of which I now write, there was neither in Emily's heart, nor in that of her seducer, any recollection of their sin. Those hearts were too full for thought—they had forgotten every thing but each other. Their love was their creation: beyond, all was night—chaos—nothing!

Lady Margaret approached them. "You will sing to us, Emily, to-night? it is *so* long since we have heard you!" It was in vain that Emily tried—her voice failed. She looked at Falkland, and could scarcely restrain her tears. She had not yet learned the latest art which sin teaches us—*its concealment!* "I will supply Lady Emily's place," said Falkland. *His* voice was calm, *his* brow serene: the world had left nothing for him to learn. "Will you play the air," he said to Mrs. St. John, "that you gave us some nights ago? I will furnish

the words." Mrs. St. John's hand trembled as she obeyed.

SONG.

1.

Ah, let us love while yet we may:
Our summer is decaying;
And woe to hearts which, in their gray
December, go a-maying.

2.

Ah, let us love, while of the fire
Time hath not yet bereft us;
With years our warmer thoughts expire,
Till only ice is left us!

3.

We 'll fly the bleak world's bitter air—
A brighter home shall win us;
And if our hearts grow weary there,
We 'll find a world within us.

4.

They preach that passion fades each hour,
That nought will pall like pleasure:
My bee, if Love's so frail a flower,
Oh, haste to hive its treasure!

5.

Wait not the hour, when all the mind
Shall to the crowd be given;
For links, which to the million bind,
Shall from the one be riven!

6.

But let us love while yet we may:
Our summer is decaying;
And woe to hearts which, in their gray
December go a-maying.

The next day Emily rose ill and feverish. In the absence of Falkland, her mind always awoke to the full sense of the guilt she had incurred. She had been brought up in the strictest, even the most fastidious principles; and her nature was so pure, that merely to err appeared like a change in existence—like an entrance into some new and unknown world, from which she shrank back, in terror to herself.

Judge, then, if she easily habituated her mind to its present degradation. She sat, that morning, pale and listless; her book lay unopened before her; her eyes were fixed upon the ground, heavy with suppressed tears. Mrs. St. John entered: no one else was in the room. She sat by her, and took her hand. Her countenance was scarcely less colourless than Emily's, but its expression was more calm and composed. "It is not too late, Emily," she said, "you have done much that you should repent—nothing to render repentance unavailing. Forgive me, if I speak to you on this subject. It is time—in a few days your fate will be decided. *I* have looked on, though hitherto I have been silent: I have witnessed that eye when it dwelt upon you; I have heard that voice when it spoke to your heart. None

ever resisted their influence long; do you imagine that you are the first who have found their power? Pardon me, pardon me, I beseech you, my dearest friend, if I pain you. I have known you from your childhood, and I only wish to preserve you spotless to your old age."

Emily wept, without replying. Mrs. St. John continued to argue and expostulate. What is so wavering as passion? When, at last, Mrs. St. John ceased, and Emily shed upon her bosom the hot tears of her anguish and repentance, she imagined that her resolution was taken, and that she could almost have vowed an eternal separation from her lover;—Falkland came that evening, and she loved him more madly than before.

Mrs. St. John was not in the saloon when Falkland entered. Lady Margaret was reading the well-known story of Lady T—— and the Duchess of M——, in which an agreement had been made and *kept* that the one who died first should return once more to the survivor. As Lady Margaret spoke laughingly of the anecdote, Emily, who was watching Falkland's countenance, was struck with the dark and sudden shade which fell over it. He moved in silence towards the window where Emily was sitting. "Do you believe," she said with a faint smile, "in the possibility of such an event?" "I believe—though I reject—nothing!" replied Falkland, "but I would give worlds for such a proof that death does not destroy." "Surely," said Emily, "you do not deny that evidence of our immortality which we gather from the Scriptures?—are *they* not all that a voice from the dead could be?" Falkland was silent for a few moments: he did not seem to hear the question: his eyes dwelt upon vacancy; and when he at last spoke, it was rather in commune with himself than in answer to her. "I have watched," said he, in a low internal tone, "over the tomb; I have called, in the agony of my heart, unto her who slept beneath; I would have *dissolved my very soul* into a spell, could it have summoned before me for one, one moment, the being who had once been the spirit of my life! I have been, as it were, *entranced* with the intensity of my own adjuration; I have gazed upon the empty air, and worked upon my mind to fill it with imaginings; I have called aloud unto the winds, and tasked my soul to waken their silence to reply. All was a waste—a stillness—an infinity—without a wanderer or a voice! The dead an-

swered me not, when I invoked them; and in the vigils of the still night I looked from the rank grass and the mouldering stones to the Eternal Heavens, as man looks from decay to immortality! Oh! that awful magnificence of repose—that living sleep—that breathing, yet unrevealing divinity, spread over those still worlds! To *them* also I poured my thoughts *but in a whisper*.—I did not dare to breathe *aloud* the unhallowed anguish of my mind to the majesty of the unsympathising stars! In the vast order of creation—in the midst of the stupendous system of universal life,—my doubt and inquiry were murmured forth—*a voice crying in the wilderness, and returning without an echo, unanswered unto myself!*"

The deep light of the summer moon shone over Falkland's countenance, which Emily gazed on, as she listened, almost tremblingly, to his words. His brow was knit and hueless, and the large drops gathered slowly over it, as if wrung from the strained yet impotent tension of the thoughts within. Emily drew nearer to him—she laid her hand upon his own. "Listen to me," she said: "if a herald from the grave could satisfy your doubt, *I would gladly die that I might return to you!*"

"Beware," said Falkland, with an agitated but solemn voice; "the *words, now so lightly spoken, may be registered on high.*" "*Be it so!*" replied Emily firmly, and she felt what she said. *Her* love penetrated beyond the tomb, and she would have forfeited all here for their union hereafter.

"In my earliest youth," said Falkland, more calmly than he had yet spoken, "I found in the present and the past of this world enough to direct my attention to the futurity of another: if I did not credit all with the enthusiast, I had no sympathies with the scorner; I sat myself down to examine and to reflect; I pored alike over the pages of the philosopher and the theologian; I was neither baffled by the subtleties, nor deterred by the contradictions of either. As men first ascertained the geography of the earth by observing the signs of the heavens, I did homage to the Unknown God, and sought from that worship to inquire into the reasonings of mankind. I did not confine myself to books—all things breathing or inanimate constituted my study. From death itself I endeavoured to extract its secret; and whole nights I have sat in the crowded asylums of the dying, watching the last spark flutter and decay.

Men die away as in sleep, without effort, or struggle, or emotion. I have looked on their countenances a moment before death, and the serenity of repose was upon them, waxing only more deep as it approached that slumber *which is never broken:* the breath grew gentler and gentler, till the lips it came from fell from each other, and all was hushed; the light had departed from the cloud, but the cloud itself, gray, cold, altered as it seemed, was as before. *They died and made no sign.* They had left the labyrinth without bequeathing us its clew. It is in vain that I have sent my spirit into the land of shadows—it has borne back no witness of its inquiry. As Newton said of himself, 'I picked up a few shells by the sea-shore, but the great ocean of truth lay undiscovered before me.'"

There was a long pause. Lady Margaret had sat down to chess with the Spaniard. No look was upon the lovers: their eyes met, and with that one glance the whole current of their thoughts was changed. The blood, which a moment before had left Falkland's cheek so colourless, rushed back to it again. The love which had so penetrated and pervaded his whole system, and which abstruser and colder reflection had just calmed, thrilled through his frame with redoubled power. As if by an involuntary and mutual impulse, their lips met; he threw his arms around her; he strained her to his bosom. "Dark as my thoughts are," he whispered, "evil as has been my life, will you not yet soothe the one, and guide the other? My Emily! my love! the *Heaven to the tumultuous ocean of my heart*—will you not be mine—mine only—wholly—and forever?" She did not answer—she did not turn from his embrace. Her cheek flushed as his breath stole over it, and her bosom heaved beneath the arm which encircled that empire so devoted to him. "Speak one word, one only word," he continued to whisper: "will you not be mine? Are you not mine at heart even at this moment?" Her head sunk upon his bosom. Those deep and eloquent eyes looked up to his through their dark lashes. "I *will* be yours," she murmured: "I am at your mercy; I have no longer any existence but in you. My only fear is, that I shall cease to be worthy of your love!"

Falkland pressed his lips once more to her own: it was his only answer, and the last seal to their compact.—As they stood before the open lattice, the still and unconscious moon looked down upon

that record of guilt. There was not a cloud in the heavens to dim *her* purity: the very winds of night had hushed themselves to do her homage: all was silent but *their* hearts. They stood beneath the calm and holy skies, a guilty and devoted pair—a fearful contrast of the sin and turbulence of this unquiet earth to the passionless serenity of the eternal heaven. The same stars, that for thousands of unfathomed years had looked upon the changes of this nether world, gleamed pale, and pure, and steadfast upon their burning but transitory vow. In a few years what of the condemnation or the recorders of that vow would remain? From other lips, on that spot, other oaths might be plighted; new pledges of unchangeable fidelity exchanged: and, year after year, in each succession of scene and time, the same stars will look from the mystery of their untracked and impenetrable home, to mock, as now, with their immutability, the variations and shadows of mankind!

* * * * *

From Erasmus Falkland, Esq., to Lady Emily Mandeville.

At length then you are to be mine—you have consented to fly with me. In three days we shall leave this country, and have no home—no world but in each other. We will go, my Emily, to those golden lands where Nature, the only companion we will suffer, wooes us, like a mother, to find our asylum in her breast; where the breezes are languid beneath the passion of the voluptuous skies; and where the purple light that invests all things with its glory, is only less tender and consecrating than the spirit which we bring. Is there not, my Emily, in the external nature which reigns over creation, and that human nature centred in ourselves, some secret and undefinable intelligence and attraction? Are not the impressions of the former as spells over the passions of the latter? and in gazing upon the loveliness around us, do we not gather, as it were, and store within our hearts, an increase of the yearning and desire of love? What can we demand from earth but its solitudes—what from heaven but its unpolluted air? All that others would ask from either, we can find in ourselves. Wealth—honour—happiness every object of ambition or desire, exist not for us without the circle of our arms! But the bower that surrounds us shall not be un-

worthy of your beauty or our love. Amidst the myrtle and the vine, and the valleys where the summer sleeps, and the rivers that murmur the memories and the legends of old; amidst the hills and the glossy glades, and the silver fountains, still all as beautiful as if the Nymph and Spirit yet held and decorated an earthly home;—amidst these we will make the couch of our bridals, and the moon of Italian skies shall keep watch on our repose.

Emily!—Emily!—how I love to repeat and to linger over that beautiful name! If to see, to address, and more than all, to touch you, has been a rapture, what word can I find in the vocabulary of happiness to express the realization of that hope which now burns within me—to mingle our youth together into one stream, wheresoever it flows; to respire the same breath; to be almost blent in the same existence; to grow, as it were, on one stem, and knit into a *single* life the feelings, the wishes, the *being* of both!

To-night I shall see you again: let one day more intervene, and—I cannot conclude the sentence! As I have written the tumultuous happiness of hope has come over me to confuse and overwhelm every thing else. At this moment my pulse riots with fever; the room swims before my eyes; every thing is indistinct and jarring—a chaos of emotions. O that happiness should ever have such excess!

When Emily received and laid this letter to her heart, she felt nothing in common with the spirit which it breathed. With that quick transition and inconstancy of feeling so common in women, and which is as frequently their safety as their peril, her mind had already repented of the weakness of the last evening, and relapsed into the irresolution and bitterness of her former remorse. Never had there been in the human breast a stronger contest between conscience and passion;—if, indeed, the extreme softness (notwithstanding its power) of Emily's attachment could be called passion; it was rather a love that had refined by the increase of its own strength; it contained nothing but the primary guilt of conceiving it, which that order of angels, *whose nature is love*, would have sought to purify away. To see him, to live with him, to count the variations of his countenance and voice, to touch his hand at moments when waking, and watch over his slumbers when he

slept—this was the essence of her wishes, and constituted the limit to her desires. Against the temptations of the present was opposed the whole history of the past. Her mind wandered from each to each, wavering and wretched, as the impulse of the moment impelled it. Hers was not, indeed, a strong character: her education and habits had weakened, while they rendered more feminine and delicate, a nature originally too soft. Every recollection of former purity called to her with the loud voice of duty, as a warning from the great guilt she was about to incur; and whenever she thought of her child—that centre of fond and sinless sensations, where once she had so wholly garnered up her heart—her feelings melted at once from the object which had so wildly held them riveted as by a spell, to dissolve and lose themselves in the great and sacred fountain of a mother's love.

When Falkland came that evening, she was sitting at a corner of the saloon, apparently occupied in reading, but her eyes were fixed upon her boy, whom Mrs. St. John was endeavouring at the opposite end of the room to amuse. The child, who was fond of Falkland, came up to him as he entered: Falkland stooped to kiss him; and Mrs. St. John said, in a low voice which just reached his ear, "Judas, too, kissed before he betrayed." Falkland's colour changed: he felt the sting the words were intended to convey. On that child, now so innocently caressing him, he was indeed about to inflict a disgrace and injury the most sensible and irremediable in his power. But whoever indulges reflection in passion? He banished the remorse from his mind as instantaneously as it arose; and, seating himself by Emily, endeavoured to inspire her with a portion of the joy and hope which animated himself. Mrs. St. John watched them with a jealous and anxious eye: she had already seen how useless had been her former attempt to arm Emily's conscience effectually against her lover; but she resolved at least to renew the impression she had then made. The danger was imminent, and any remedy must be prompt; and it was something to protract, even if she could not finally break off, an union against which were arrayed all the angry feelings of jealousy, as well as the better affections of the friend. Emily's eye was already brightening beneath the words that Falkland whispered in her ear, when Mrs. St John approached

her. She placed herself on a chair beside them, and, unmindful of Falkland's bent and angry brow, attempted to create a general and common-place conversation. Lady Margaret had invited two or three people in the neighbourhood; and when these came in, music and cards were resorted to immediately, with that English *politesse*, which takes the earliest opportunity to show that the conversation of our friends is the last thing for which we have invited them. But Mrs. St. John never left the lovers; and at last, when Falkland, in despair of her obstinacy, arose to join the card table, she said, "Pray, Mr. Falkland, were you not intimate at one time with *** ***, who eloped with Lady ***?" "I knew him but slightly," said Falkland; and then added, with a sneer, "the only times I ever met him were at your house." Mrs. St. John, without noticing the sarcasm, continued:—"What an unfortunate affair that proved! They were very much attached to one another in early life—the *only* excuse, perhaps, for a woman's breaking her subsequent vows. They eloped. The remainder of their history is briefly told: it is that of all who forfeit every thing for passion, and forget that of every thing it is the briefest in duration. He who had sacrificed his honour for her sacrificed her also as lightly for another. She could not bear his infidelity; but how could she reproach him? In the very act of yielding to, she had become unworthy of, his love. She *did not* reproach him—she died of a broken heart! I saw her just before her death, for I was distantly related to her, and I could not forsake her utterly even in her sin. She then spoke to me only of the child by her former marriage, whom she had left in the years when it most needed her care: she questioned me of its health—its education—its very growth: the minutest thing was not beneath her inquiry. His tidings were all that brought back to her mind 'her redolence of joy and spring.' I brought that child to her one day: *he* at least had never forgotten her. How bitterly both wept when they were separated! and she—poor, poor Ellen—an hour after their separation was no more!" There was a pause for a few minutes. Emily was deeply affected. Mrs. St. John had anticipated the effect she had produced, and concerted the method to increase it. "It is singular," she resumed, "that the evening before her elopement, some verses were sent to her anonymously—I do not think, Emily, that you have ever

seen them. Shall I sing them to you now?" and without waiting for a reply, she placed herself at the piano; and with a low but sweet voice, gradually aided in effect by the extreme feeling of her manner, she sang the following verses:—

TO * * *

1.

And wilt thou leave that happy home,
Where once it was so sweet to live?
Ah! think, before thou seek'st to roam,
What safer shelter Guilt can give!

2.

The Bird may rove, and still regain
With spotless wings her wonted rest;
But home, once lost, is ne'er again
Restored to Woman's erring breast!

3.

If wandering o'er a world of flowers,
The heart at times would ask repose;
But *thou* wouldst lose the only bowers
Of rest amid a world of woes.

4.

Recall thy youth's unsullied vow—
The past which on thee smiled so fair;
Then turn from thence to picture now
The frowns thy future fate must wear!

5.

No hour, no hope, can bring relief
To her who hides a blighted name;
For hearts unbow'd by stormiest *grief*
Will break beneath one breeze of *shame!*

6.

And when thy child's deserted years
Amid life's early woes are thrown,
Shall menial bosoms soothe the tears
That should be shed on thine alone?

7.

When on thy name his lips shall call,
(That tender name, the earliest taught!)
Thou wouldst not Shame and Sin were all
The memories link'd around its thought!

8.

If Sickness haunt his infant bed,
Ah! what could then replace thy care?
Could hireling steps as gently tread
As if a Mother's soul was there?

9.

Enough! 'tis not too late to shun
The bitter draught thyself wouldst fill;
The latest link is not undone;—
Thy bark is in the haven still

10.

If doom'd to grief through life thou art,
'Tis thine at least unstain'd to die!
Oh! better break at once thy heart,
Than rend it from its holiest tie!

It were vain to attempt describing Emily's feelings when the song ceased. The scene floated before her eyes indistinct and dark. The violence of the emotions she attempted to conceal pressed upon her almost to choking. She rose, looked at Falkland with one look of such anguish and despair that it froze his very heart, and left the room without uttering a word. A moment more—they heard a noise—a fall. They rushed out—Emily was stretched on the ground, apparently lifeless. *She had broken a blood-vessel!*

FALKLAND.

BOOK IV.

From Mrs. St. John to Erasmus Falkland, Esq.

At last I can give a more favourable answer to your letters. Emily is now *quite* out of danger. Since the day you forced yourself, with such a disinterested regard for her health and reputation, into her room, she grew (no thanks to your forbearance) gradually better. I trust that she will be able to see you in a few days. I hope this the more, because she now feels and decides that it will be for the last time. You have, it is true, injured her happiness for life; her virtue, thank Heaven, is yet spared; and though you have made her wretched, you will never, I trust, succeed in making her despised.

You ask me, with some menacing and more complaint, why I am so bitter against you. I will tell you. I not only know Emily, and feel confident, from that knowledge, that nothing can recompense her for the reproaches of conscience, but I know *you*, and am convinced that you are the last man to render her happy. I set aside, for the moment, all rules of religion and morality in general, and speak to you (to use the cant and abused phrase) "without prejudice" as to the particular instance. Emily's nature is soft and susceptible, yours fickle and wayward in the extreme. The smallest change or caprice in you, which would not be noticed by a mind less delicate, would wound *her* to the heart. You know that the very softness of her character arises from its want of strength. Consider, for a moment, if she could bear the humiliation and disgrace which visit so heavily the offences of an English wife? She has been brought up in the strictest notions of morality; and, in a mind not naturally strong, nothing can efface the first impressions of education. She is not—indeed she is not—fit for a life of sorrow or degradation.

In another character, another line of conduct might be desirable; but with regard to *her*, pause, Falkland, I beseech you, before you attempt again to destroy her for ever. I have said all. Farewell.

Your, and above all, Emily's friend,

J. S.

From Erasmus Falkland, Esq. to Lady Emily Mandeville.

You will see me, Emily, now that you are recovered sufficiently to do so without danger. I do not ask this as a favour. If my love has deserved any thing from yours, if past recollections give me any claim over you, if my nature has not forfeited the spell which it formerly possessed upon your own, I demand it as a right.

The bearer waits for your answer.

E. F.

From Lady Emily Mandeville to Erasmus Falkland, Esq.

SEE you, Falkland! Can you doubt it? Can you think for a moment that your commands can ever cease to become a law to me? Come here whenever you please. If, during my illness, they have prevented it, it was without my knowledge. I await you; but I own that this interview will be the last, if I can claim any thing from your mercy.

EMILY MANDEVILLE.

From Erasmus Falkland, Esq. to Lady Emily Mandeville.

I HAVE seen you, Emily, and for the last time! My eyes are dry—my hand does not tremble. I live, move, breathe, as before—and yet I have seen you for the last time! You told me—even while you leaned on my bosom, even while your lip pressed mine—you told me (and I saw your sincerity) to spare you, and to see you no more. You told me you had no longer any will, any fate of your own; that you would, if I still continued to desire it, leave friends, home, honour, for me; but you did not disguise from me that you would, in so doing, leave happiness also. You did not conceal from me that I was not sufficient to constitute all your world: you threw yourself, as you had done once before, upon what you called my generosity: you did not deceive yourself then; you have not deceived yourself now. In two weeks I shall leave England, probably for ever. I have another country still

more dear to me, from its afflictions and humiliation. Public ties differ but little in their nature from private; and this confession of preference of what is debased to what is exalted, wil be an answer to Mrs. St. John's assertion, that we cannot love in disgrace as we can in honour. Enough of this. In the choice, my poor Emily, that you have made, I cannot reproach you. You have done wisely, rightly, virtuously. You said that this separation must rest rather with me than with yourself; that you would be mine the moment I demanded it. I will not now or ever accept this promise. No one, much less one whom I love so intensely, so truly as I do you, shall ever receïve disgrace at my hands, unless she can feel that that disgrace would be dearer to her than glory elsewhere; that the simple fate of being mine was not so much a recompense as a reward; and that, in spite of worldly depreciation and shame, it would constitute and concentrate all her visions of happiness and pride. I am now going to bid you farewell. May you—I say this disinterestedly, and from my very heart—may you soon forget how much you have loved and yet love me! For this purpose, you cannot have a better companion than Mrs. St. John. Her opinion of me is loudly expressed, and probably true; at all events, you will do wisely to believe it. You will hear me attacked and reproached by many. I do not deny the charges; you know best what I have deserved from *you*. God bless you, Emily. Wherever I go, I shall never cease to love you as I do now. May you be happy in your child and in your conscience. Once more God bless you, and farewell!

ERASMUS FALKLAND.

Fram Lady Emily Mandeville to Erasmus Falkland, Esq.

O FALKLAND! you have conquered! I am yours—*yours only—wholly and for ever.* When your letter came, my hand trembled so, that I could not open it for several minutes; and when I did, I felt as if the very earth had passed from my feet. You were going from your country; you were about to be lost to me for ever. I could restrain myself no longer; all my virtue, my pride, forsook me at once. Yes, yes, you are indeed my world. I will fly with you any where—every where. Nothing can be dreadful, but not seeing you; I would be a servant—a slave—a dog, as long as I could be with you; hear one

tone of your voice, catch one glance of your eye. I scarcely see the paper before me, my thoughts are so straggling and confused. Write to me one word, Falkland; one word, and I will lay it to my heart and be happy.

From Erasmus Falkland to Lady Emily Mandeville.

—— *Hotel, London.*

I HASTEN to you, Emily—my own and only love. Your letter has restored me to life. To-morrow we shall meet.

E. F.

It was with mingled feelings, alloyed and embittered, in spite of the burning hope which predominated over all, that Falkland returned to E——. He knew that he was near the completion of his most ardent wishes; that he was within the grasp of a prize which included all the thousand objects of ambition, into which, among other men, the desires are divided; the only dreams he had ventured to form for years, were about to kindle into life. He had every reason to be happy;—such is the inconsistency of human nature, that he was almost wretched. The morbid melancholy, habitual to him, threw its colourings over every emotion and idea. He knew the character of the woman whose affections he had seduced; and he trembled to think of the doom to which he was about to condemn her. With this, there came over his mind a long train of dark and remorseful recollections. Emily was not the only one whose destruction he had prepared. All who had loved him, he had repaid with ruin; and *one*—the first—the fairest—and the most loved, with death.

That last remembrance, more bitterly than all, possessed him. It will be recollected that Falkland, in the letters which begin this work, speaking of the ties he had formed after the loss of his first love, says, that it was the senses, not the affections, that were engaged. Never, indeed, since her death, till he met Emily, had his *heart* been unfaithful to her memory. Alas! none but those who have cherished in their souls an image of the dead; who have watched over it for long and bitter years in secresy and gloom; who have felt that it was to them as a holy and fairy spot which no eye but theirs could profane; who have filled all things with *recollections* as with a spell, and made the universe one wide mausole-

um of the lost;—none but those can understand the mysteries of that regret which is shed over every after passion, though it be more burning and intense;—that sense of sacrilege with which we fill up the haunted recesses of the spirit with a new and a living idol, and perpetrate the last act of infidelity to that buried love, which the heavens that now receive her, the earth where we beheld her, tell us, with the unnumbered voices of Nature, to worship with the incense of our faith.

His carriage stopped at the lodge. The woman who opened the gates gave him the following note:—

"Mr. Mandeville is returned; I almost fear that he suspects our attachment. Julia says, that if you come again to E——, she will inform him. I dare not, dearest Falkland, see you here. What is to be done? I am very ill and feverish; my brain burns so, that I can think, feel, remember nothing, but the one thought, feeling, and remembrance;—that through shame, and despite of guilt, in life, and till death, I am yours.

"E. M."

As Falkland read this note, his extreme and engrossing love for Emily doubled with each word: an instant before, and the certainty of seeing her had suffered his mind to be divided into a thousand objects; now, doubt united them once more into one.

He altered his route to L——, and despatched from thence a short note to Emily, imploring her to meet him that evening by the lake, in order to arrange their ultimate flight. Her answer was brief, and blotted with her tears; but it was assent.

During the whole of that day, at least from the moment she received Falkland's letter, Emily was scarcely sensible of a single idea; she sat still and motionless, gazing on vacancy, and seeing nothing within her mind, or in the objects which surrounded her, but one dreary blank. Sense, thought, feeling, even remorse, were congealed and frozen; and the tides of emotion were still, *but they were ice!*

As Falkland's servant had waited without to deliver the note to Emily, Mrs. St. John had observed him; her alarm and surprise only served to quicken her presence of mind. She intercepted Emily's answer under pretence of giving it herself to Falkland's servant. She read it, and her resolution was formed. After carefully resealing and delivering it to the servant,

she went at once to Mr. Mandeville, and revealed Lady Emily's attachment to Falkland. In this act of treachery, she was solely instigated by her passions; and when Mandeville, roused from his wonted apathy to a paroxysm of indignation, thanked her again and again for the generosity of friendship which he imagined was all that actuated her communication, he dreamed not of the fierce and ungovernable jealousy which envied the very disgrace that her confession was intended to award. Well said the French enthusiast, "that the heart, the most serene to appearance, resembles that calm and glassy fountain which cherishes the monster of the Nile in the bosom of its waters." Whatever reward Mrs. St. John proposed to herself in this action, verily she has had the recompense that was her due. Those consequences of her treachery, which I hasten to relate, have ceased to others—to *her* they remain. Amidst the pleasures of dissipation, one reflection has rankled at her mind; one dark cloud has rested between the sunshine and her soul: like the murderer in Shakspeare, the revel where she fled for forgetfulness has teemed to her with the spectres of remembrance. O thou untameable conscience! thou that never flatterest—thou that watchest over the human heart never to slumber or to sleep—it is thou that takest from us the present, barrest to us the future, and knittest the eternal chain that binds us to the rock and the vulture of the past!

The evening came on still and dark; a breathless and heavy oppression seemed gathered over the air; the full large clouds lay without motion in the dull sky, from between which, at long and scattered intervals, the wan stars looked out; a double shadow seemed to invest the grouped and gloomy trees that stood unwaving in the melancholy horizon. The waters of the lake lay heavy and unagitated, as the sleep of death; and the broken reflections of the abrupt and winding banks rested upon their bosoms, like the dream-like remembrance of a former existence.

The hour of the appointment was arrived: Falkland stood by the spot, gazing upon the lake before him; his cheek was flushed, his hand was parched and dry with the consuming fire within him. His pulse beat thick and rapidly; the demon of evil passions was upon his soul. He stood so lost in his own reflections, that he did not for some moments perceive the fond and tearful eye which

was fixed upon him: on that brow and lip, thought seemed always so beautiful, so divine, that to disturb its repose was like a profanation of something holy; and though Emily came towards him with a light and hurried step, she paused involuntarily to gaze upon that noble countenance which realized her earliest visions of the beauty and majesty of love. He turned slowly, and perceived her; he came to her with his own peculiar smile; he drew her to his bosom in silence; he pressed his lips to her forehead: she leaned upon his bosom, and forgot all but him. Oh! if there be one feeling which makes Love, even guilty Love, a god, it is the knowledge that in the midst of this breathing world he reigns aloof and alone; and that those who are occupied with his worship know nothing of the pettiness, the strife, the bustle which pollute and agitate the ordinary inhabitants of earth! What was now to them, as they stood alone in the deep stillness of nature, every thing that had engrossed them before they had met and loved? Even in her, the recollections of guilt and grief subsided: she was only sensible of one thought —the presence of the being who stood beside her,

That ocean to the rivers of her soul.

They sat down beneath an oak: Falkland stooped to kiss the cold and pale cheek that still rested upon his breast. His kisses were like lava: the turbulent and stormy elements of sin and desire were aroused even to madness within him. He clasped her still nearer to his bosom: her lips answered to his own: they caught perhaps something of the spirit which they received: her eyes were half closed; the bosom heaved wildly, that was pressed to his beating and burning heart. The skies grew darker and darker, as the night stole over them: one low roll of thunder broke upon the curtained and heavy air—*they* did not hear it; and yet it was the knell of peace —lost, lost for ever to their souls!

* * * * *
* * * * *
* * * * *

They separated as they had never done before. In Emily's bosom there was a dreary void—a vast blank—over which there went a low, deep voice like a Spirit's—a sound indistinct and strange, that spoke a language she knew not; but felt that it told of woe — guilt — doom. Her senses were stunned: the vitality of her feelings was numbed and torpid: the first herald of despair is insensibility. "To-morrow then," said Falkland—and his voice

for the first time seemed strange and harsh to her, "we will fly hence forever: meet me at day-break—the carriage shall be in attendance—we cannot now unite too soon—would that at this very moment we were prepared!"—"To-morrow!" repeated Emily, "at day-break!" and as she clung to him, he felt her shudder: "to-morrow—aye—to-morrow!—" one kiss—one embrace—one word *farewell*—and they parted.

Falkland returned to L——; a gloomy foreboding rested upon his mind: that dim and indescribable fear, which no earthly or human cause can explain—that shrinking within self—that vague terror of the future—that grappling, as it were with some unknown shade—that wandering of the spirit—whither?—that cold, cold creeping dread—of what? As he entered the house, he met his confidential servant. He gave him orders respecting the flight of the morrow, and then retired into the chamber where he slept. It was an antique and large room: the wainscot was of oak; and one broad and high window looked over the expanse of country which stretched beneath. He sat himself by the casement in silence—he opened it: the dull air came over his forehead, not with a sense of freshness, but like the parching atmosphere of the east, charged with a weight and fever that sank heavy into his soul. He turned:—he threw himself upon the bed, and placed his hands over his face. His thoughts were scattered into a thousand indistinct forms, but over all, there was one rapturous remembrance; and that was, that the morrow was to unite him for ever to her whose possession had only rendered her more dear. Meanwhile, the hours rolled on; and as he lay thus silent, and still, the clock of the distant church struck with a distinct and solemn sound upon his ear. It was the half-hour after midnight. At that moment an icy thrill ran, slow and curdling, through his veins. His heart, as if with a presentiment of what was to follow, beat violently, and then stopped; life itself seemed ebbing away; cold drops stood upon his forehead; his eyelids trembled, and the balls reeled and glazed, like those of a dying man; a deadly fear gathered over him, so that his flesh quivered, and every hair in his head seemed instinct with a separate life: the very marrow of his bones crept, and his blood waxed thick, and thick as if stagnating into an ebbless and frozen substance. He started in a wild and unutterable terror. There stood,

at the far end of the room, a dim and thin shape like moonlight, without outline or form; still and indistinct, and shadowy. He gazed on, speechless and motionless; his faculties and senses seemed locked in an unnatural trance. By degrees the shape became clearer and clearer to his fixed and dilating eye. He saw, as through a floating and mist-like veil, the features of Emily; but how changed?—sunken, and hueless, and set in death. The dropping lip, from which there seemed to trickle a deep red stain like blood; the lead-like and lifeless eye; the calm, awful, mysterious repose which broods over the aspect of the dead;—all grew, as it were, from the hazy cloud that encircled them for one brief, agonizing, moment, and then as suddenly faded away. The spell passed from his senses. He sprang from the bed with a loud cry. All was quiet! There was not a trace of what he had witnessed. The feeble light of the skies rested upon the spot where the apparition had stood: upon that spot he stood also. He stamped upon the floor—it was firm beneath his footing. He passed his hands over his body—he was awake—he was unchanged: earth, air, heaven, were around him as before. What had thus gone over his soul to awe and overcome it to such weakness? To these questions his reason could return no answer. Bold by nature, and sceptical by philosophy, his mind gradually recovered its original tone: he did not give way to conjecture; he endeavoured to discard it: he sought by natural causes to account for the apparition he had seen or imagined; and, as he felt the blood again circulating in its accustomed courses, and the night air coming chill over his feverish frame, he smiled with a stern and scornful bitterness at the terror which had so shaken, and the fancy which had so deluded, his mind.

Are there not "more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in our philosophy?" A Spirit may hover in the air that we breathe: the depth of our most secret solitudes may be peopled by the invisible: our uprisings and our down-sittings may be marked by a witness from the grave. In our walks the dead may be behind us; in our banquets they may sit at the board; and the chill breath of the night wind that stirs the curtains of our bed may bear a message our senses receive not from lips that once have pressed kisses on our own! Why is it that at moments there creeps over us an awe, a terror, over-

powering but undefined? Why is it that we shudder without a cause, and feel the warm life-blood stand still in its courses? *Are the dead too near?* Do unearthly wings touch us as they flit around? Has our soul any intercourse which the body shares not, though it feels, with the supernatural world — mysterious revealings—unimaginable communion—a language of dread and power, shaking to its centre the fleshly barrier that divides the spirit from its race?

How fearful is the very life which we hold! We have our being beneath a cloud, and are a marvel even to ourselves. There is not a single thought which has its affixed limits. Like circles in the water, our researches weaken as they extend, and vanish at last into the immeasurable and unfathomable space of the vast unknown. We are like children in the dark; we tremble in a shadowy and terrible void, peopled with our fancies! Life is our real night, and the first gleam of the morning, which brings us certainty, *is death.*

Falkland sat the remainder of that night by the window, watching the clouds become gray as the dawn rose, and its earliest breeze awoke. He heard the trampling of the horses beneath: he drew his cloak round him, and descended. It was on a turning of the road beyond the lodge that he directed the carriage to wait, and he then proceeded to the place appointed. Emily was not yet there. He walked to and fro with an agitated and hurried step. The impression of the night had in a great measure been effaced from his mind, and he gave himself up without reserve to the warm and sanguine hopes which he had so much reason to conceive. He thought too, at moments, of those bright climates beneath which he designed their asylum, where the very air is music, and the light is like the colourings of love; and he associated the sighs of a mutual rapture with the fragrance of myrtles, and the breath of a Tuscan heaven. Time glided on. The hour was long past, yet Emily came not! The sun rose, and Falkland turnd in dark and angry discontent from its beams. With every moment his impatience increased, and at last he could restrain himself no longer. He proceeded toward the house. He stood for some time at a distance; but as all seemed still hushed in repose, he drew nearer and nearer till he reached the door: to his astonishment it was open. He saw forms passing rapidly through the hall. He heard a confusion and indistinct murmur. At

length he caught a glimpse of Mrs. St. John. He could command himself no more. He sprang forwards; entered the door; the hall; and caught her by a part of her dress. He could not speak, but his countenance said all his lips refused Mrs. St. John burst into tears when she saw him. "Good God!" she said, "why are you here? Is it possible you have yet learned ——?" Her voice failed her. Falkland had by this time recovered himself. He turned to the servants who gathered around him. "Speak," he said calmly. "What has occurred?" "My lady—my lady!" burst at once from several tongues. "What of her?" said Falkland, with a blanched cheek, but unchanging voice. There was a pause. At that instant a man, whom Falkland recognized as the physician of the neighbourhood, passed the opposite end of the hall. A light, a scorching and intolerable light, broke upon him. "She is dying—she is dead perhaps," he said, in a low sepulchral tone, turning his eye around till it had rested upon every one present. *Not one answered.* He paused a moment, as if stunned by a sudden shock, and then sprang up the stairs. He passed the boudoir, and entered the room where Emily slept. The shutters were only partially closed: a faint light broke through and rested on the bed; beside it bent two women. Them he neither heeded nor saw. He drew aside the curtain. He beheld the same as he had seen it in his vision of the night before—the changed and lifeless countenance of Emily Mandeville? That face, still so tenderly beautiful, was partially turned towards him. Some dark stains upon the lip and neck told how she had died—the blood-vessel she had broken before had burst again. The bland and soft eyes, which for him never had but *one* expression, were closed; and the long and dishevelled tresses half hid, while they contrasted, that bosom, which had but the night before first learned to thrill beneath his own. Happier in her fate than she deserved, she passed from this bitter life ere the punishment of her guilt had begun. She was not doomed to wither beneath the blight of shame, nor the coldness of estranged affection. From him whom she had so worshipped, she was not condemned to bear wrong nor change. She died while his passion was yet in its spring—before a blossom, a leaf, had faded; and she sank to repose while his kiss was yet warm upon her lip, and her last breath almost mingled with his. For the woman who has erred, life has no

exchange for such a death. Falkland stood mute and motionless: not one word of grief or horror escaped his lips. At length he bent down. He took the hand which lay outside the bed; he pressed it; it replied not to the pressure, but fell cold and heavy from his own. He put his cheek to her lips; not the faintest breath came from them; and then for the first time a change passed over his countenance: he pressed upon those lips one long and last kiss, and, without word, or sign, or tear, he turned from the chamber. Two hours afterwards he was found senseless upon the ground: it was upon the spot where he had met Emily the night before.

For weeks he knew nothing of this earth—he was encompassed with the spectres of a terrible dream. All was confusion, darkness, horror—a series and a change of torture! At one time he was hurried through the heavens in the womb of a fiery star, girt above and below and around with unextinguishable but unconsuming flames. Wherever he trod, as he wandered through his vast and blazing prison, the molten fire was his footing, and the breath of fire was his air. Flowers, and trees, and hills were in that world as in ours, but wrought from one lurid and intolerable light; and, scattered around, rose gigantic palaces and domes of the living flame, like the mansions of the city of Hell. With every moment there passed to and fro shadowy forms, on whose countenances was engraven unutterable anguish; but not a shriek, not a groan rung through the red air; *for the doomed, who fed and inhabited the flames, were forbidden the consolation of voice.* Above there sat, fixed and black, a solid and impenetrable cloud—*Night frozen into substance;* and from the midst there hung a banner of a pale and sickly flame, on which was written "For Ever." A river rushed rapidly beside him. He stooped to slake the agony of his thirst—the waves *were waves of fire;* and, as he started from the burning draught, he longed to shriek aloud, *and could not.* Then he cast his despairing eyes above for mercy, and saw on the livid and motionless banner "For Ever."

A change came o'er the spirit of his dream:

He was suddenly borne upon the winds and storms to the oceans of an eternal winter. He fell stunned and unstruggling upon the ebbless and sluggish waves. Slowly and heavily they rose over him as he sank: then came the lengthened and suffocat-

ing torture of that drowning death — the impotent and convulsive contest with the closing waters—the gurgle, the choking, the bursting of the pent breath,—the flutter of the heart, its agony, *and its stillness.* He recovered. He was a thousand fathoms beneath the sea, chained to a rock round which the heavy waters rose as a wall. He felt his own flesh rot and decay, perishing from his limbs piece by piece; and he saw the coral banks, which it requires a thousand ages to form, rise slowly from their slimy bed, and spread atom by atom, till they became a shelter for the leviathan: *their growth was his only record of eternity;* and ever and ever, around and above him, came vast and misshapen things—the wonders of the secret deeps; and the sea serpent, the huge chimæra of the north, made its resting-place by his side, glaring upon him with a livid and death-like eye, wan, yet burning *as an expiring sun.* But over all, in every change, in every moment of that immortality, there was present one pale and motionless countenance, never turning from his own. The fiends of hell, the monsters of the hidden ocean, had no horror so awful *as the human face of the dead whom he had loved.*

The word of his sentence was gone forth. Alike through that delirium and its more fearful awakening, through the past, through the future, through the vigils of the joyless day, and the broken dreams of the night, there was a charm upon his soul—a hell within himself; and the curse of his sentence was—*never to forget!*

When Lady Emily returned home on that guilty and eventful night, she stole at once to her room: she dismissed her servant, and threw herself upon the ground in that deep despair which on this earth can never again know hope. She lay there without the power to weep, or the courage to pray—how long, she knew not. Like the period before creation, her mind was a chaos of jarring elements, and knew neither the method of reflection, nor the division of time.

As she rose, she heard a slight knock at the door, and her husband entered. Her heart misgave her; and when she saw him close the door carefully before he approached her, she felt as if she could have sunk into the earth, alike from her internal shame, and her fear of its detection.

Mr. Mandeville was a weak, common-place, character; indifferent in ordinary matters, but, like most

imbecile minds, violent and furious when aroused. "Is this, Madam, addressed to you?" he cried in a voice of thunder, as he placed a letter before her; (it was one of Falkland's) "and this, and this, Madam?" said he, in a still louder tone, as he flung them out one after another from her own escrutoire, which he had broken open.

Emily sank back, and gasped for breath. Mandeville rose, and, laughing fiercely, seized her by the arm. He grasped it with all his force. She uttered a faint scream of terror; he did not heed it; he flung her from him, and, as she fell upon the ground, the blood gushed in torrents from her lips. In the sudden change of feeling which alarm created, he raised her in his arms. *She was a corpse!* At that instant the clock struck upon his ear with a startling and solemn sound; *it was the half-hour after midnight!*

The grave is now closed upon that soft and erring heart, with its guiltiest secret unrevealed. She went to that last home with a blest and unblighted name; for her guilt was unknown, and her virtues are yet recorded in the memories of the Poor.

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They laid her in the stately vaults of her ancient line, and her bier was honoured with tears from hearts not less stricken, because their sorrow, if violent, was brief. For the dead there are many mourners, but only one monument—the bosom which loved them *best*. The spot where the hearse rested, the green turf beneath, the surrounding trees, the gray tower of the village church, and the proud halls rising beyond,—all had witnessed the childhood, the youth, the bridal-day, of the being whose last rites and solemnities they were to witness now. The very bell which rang for her birth had rung also for the marriage peal; it *now* tolled for her death. But a little while, and she had gone forth from that home of her young and unclouded years, amidst the acclamations and blessings of all, a bride, with the insignia of bridal pomp—in the first bloom of her girlish beauty—in the first innocence of her unawakened heart, weeping, not for the future she was entering, but for the past she was about to leave, and smiling through her tears, as if innocence had no business with grief. On the same spot, where he had then waved his farewell, stood the father now. On the grass which they had then covered, flocked the

peasants whose wants her childhood had relieved; by the same priest who had blessed her bridals, bent the bridegroom who had plighted its vow. There was not a tree, not a blade of grass withered. The day itself was bright and glorious; such was it when it smiled upon her nuptials. And *she*—*she*—but four little years, and all youth's innocence darkened, and earth's beauty come to dust! Alas! not for her, but the mourner whom she left! In death even love is forgotten; but in life there is no bitterness so utter as to feel every thing is unchanged except the One Being who was the soul of all—to know *the world* is the same, but that *its sunshine* is departed.

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FALKLAND.

BOOK V.

THE noon was still and sultry. Along the narrow street of the small village of Iodar poured the wearied, but yet unconquered band, which embodied in that district of Spain the last hope and energy of freedom. The countenances of the soldiers were haggard and dejected; they displayed even less of the vanity, than their accoutrements exhibited, of the pomp and circumstance of war. Yet their garments were such as even the peasants had disdained: covered with blood and dust, and tattered into a thousand rags, they betokened nothing of chivalry but its endurance of hardship; even the rent and sullied banners drooped sullenly along their staves, as if the winds themselves had become the minions of Fortune, and disdained to swell the insignia of those whom she had deserted. The glorious music of battle was still. An air of dispirited and defeated enterprise hung over the whole array. "Thank Heaven," said the chief, who closed the last file as it marched on to its scanty refreshment and brief repose; "thank Heaven, we are at least out of the reach of pursuit; and the mountains, those last retreats of liberty, are before us!" "True, Don Rafael," replied the youngest of two officers who rode by the side of the commander; "and if we can cut our passage to Mina, we may yet plant the standard of the Constitution in Madrid." "Aye," added the elder officer, "and sing Riego's hymn in the place of the Escurial!" "Our sons may!" said the chief, who was indeed Riego himself, "but for us—all hope is over! Were we united, we could scarcely make head against the armies of France; and divided as we are, the wonder is that we have escaped so long. Hemmed in by invasion, our great enemy has been ourselves. Such has been the hostility faction has created between Spaniard and Spaniard, that we seem to have none left to

waste upon Frenchmen. We cannot establish freedom if men are willing to be slaves. We have no hope, Don Alphonso—no hope—but that of death!" As Riego concluded this desponding answer, so contrary to his general enthusiasm, the younger officer rode on among the soldiers, cheering them with words of congratulation and comfort; ordering their several divisions; cautioning them to be prepared at a moment's notice; and impressing on their remembrance those small but essential points of discipline, which a Spanish troop might well be supposed to disregard. When Riego and his companion entered the small and miserable hovel which constituted the head-quarters of the place, this man still remained without; and it was not till he had slackened the girths of his Andalusian horse, and placed before it the undainty provender which the *ecurie* afforded, that he thought of rebinding more firmly the bandages wound around a deep and painful sabre cut in the left arm, which for several hours had been wholly neglected. The officer, whom Riego had addressed by the name of Alphonso, came out of the hut just as his comrade was vainly endeavoring, with his teeth and one hand to replace the ligature. As he assisted him, he said, "You know not, my dear Falkland, how bitterly I reproach myself for having ever persuaded you to a cause where contest seems to have no hope, and danger no glory." Falkland smiled bitterly. "Do not deceive yourself, my dear uncle," said he; "your persuasions would have been unavailing but for the suggestions of my own wishes. I am not one of those enthusiasts who entered on your cause with high hopes and chivalrous designs: I asked but forgetfulness and excitement—I have found them! I would not exchange a single pain I have endured for what would have constituted the pleasures of other men:—but enough of this. What time, think you, have we for repose?" "Till the evening," answered Alphonso: "our route will then most probably be directed to the Sierra Morena. The General is extremely weak and exhausted, and needs a longer rest than we shall gain. It is singular that with such weak health he should endure so great an excess of hardship and fatigue." During this conversation they entered the hut. Riego was already asleep. As they seated themselves to the wretched provision of the place, a distant and indistinct noise was heard. It came first on

their ears like the birth of the mountain wind—low, and hoarse, and deep: gradually it grew loud and louder, and mingled with other sounds which they defined too well—the hum, the murmur, the trampling of steeds, the ringing echoes of the rapid march of armed men! They heard and knew the foe was upon them!—a moment more and the drum beat to arms. "By St. Pelagio," cried Riego, who had sprung from his light sleep at the first sound of the approaching danger, unwilling to believe his fears, "it cannot be: the French are far behind;" and then, as the drum beat, his voice suddenly changed,—"the enemy! the enemy! D'Aguilar, to horse!" and with those words he rushed out of the hut. The soldiers, who had scarcely begun to disperse, were soon re-collected. In the meanwhile the French commander, D'Argout, taking advantage of the surprise he had occasioned, poured on his troops, which consisted solely of cavalry, undaunted and undelayed by the fire of the posts. On, on they drove ike a swift cloud charged vith thunder, and gathering wrath as it hurried by, before it burst in tempest on the beholders. They did not pause till they reached the farther extremity of the village there the Spanish infantry were already formed into two squares. "Halt!" cried the French commander: the troops suddenly stopped, confronting the nearer square. There was one brief pause—the moment before the storm. "Charge!" said D'Argout, and the word rang throughout the line up to the clear and placid sky. Up flashed the steel like lightning; on went the troop like the dash of a thousand waves when the sun is upon them; and before the breath of the riders was thrice drawn, came the crash—the shock—the slaughter of battle. The Spaniards made but a faint resistance to the impetuosity of the onset: they broke on every side beneath the force of the charge, like the weak barriers of a rapid and swollen stream; and the French troops, after a brief but bloody victory, (joined by a second squadron from the rear,) advanced immediately upon the Spanish cavalry. Falkland was by the side of Riego. As the troop advanced, it would have been curious to notice the contrast of expression in the face of each; the Spaniard's features lighted up with the daring enthusiasm of his nature, every trace of their usual languor and exhaustion vanished beneath the unconquerable soul that blazed out the brighter for the debility of the frame;

the brow knit; the eye flashing; the lip quivering: —and close beside, the calm, stern, passionless repose that brooded over the severe yet noble beauty of Falkland's countenance. To him danger brought scorn, not enthusiasm: he rather despised than defied it. "The dastards! they waver," said Riego, in an accent of despair, as his troop faltered beneath the charge of the French: and so saying, he spurred his steed on to the foremost line. The contest was longer, but not less decisive than the one just concluded. The Spaniards, thrown into confusion by the first shock, never recovered themselves. Falkland, who, in his anxiety to rally and inspirit the soldiers, had advanced with two other officers beyond the ranks, was soon surrounded by a detachment of dragoons: the wound in his left arm scarcely suffered him to guide his horse: he was in the most imminent danger. At that moment D'Aguilar, at the head of his own immediate followers, cut his way into the circle, and covered Falkland's retreat; another detachment of the enemy came up, and they were a second time surrounded. In the meanwhile, the main body of the Spanish cavalry were flying in all directions, and Riego's deep voice was heard at intervals, through the columns of smoke and dust, calling and exhorting them in vain. D'Aguilar and his scanty troop, after a desperate skirmish, broke again through the enemy's line drawn up against their retreat. The rank closed after them, like waters when the object that pierced them has sunk: Falkland and his two companions were again environed: he saw his comrades cut to the earth before him. He pulled up his horse for one moment, clove down with one desperate blow the dragoon with whom he was engaged, and then setting his spurs to the very rowels into his horse, dashed at once through the circle of his foes. His remarkable presence of mind, and the strength and sagacity of his horse, befriended him. Three sabres flashed before him, and glanced harmless from his raised sword, like lightning on the water. The circle was passed! As he galloped towards Riego, his horse started from a dead body that lay across the path. He reined up for one instant, for the countenance, which looked upwards, struck him as familiar. What was his horror, when, in that livid and distorted face, he recognized his uncle! The thin grizzled

hairs were besprent with gore and brains, and the blood yet oozed from the spot where the ball had passed through his temple. Falkland had but a brief interval for grief, the pursuers were close behind: he heard the snort of the foremost horse before he again put spurs into his own. Riego was holding a hasty consultation with his principal officers. As Falkland rode breathless up to them, they had decided on the conduct expedient to adopt. They led the remaining square of infantry towards the chain of mountains against which the village as it were leaned; and there the men dispersed in all directions. "For us," said Riego to the followers on horseback who gathered around him, "for us the mountains still promise a shelter. We must ride, gentlemen, for our lives — Spain will want *them* yet."

Wearied and exhausted as they were, that small and devoted troop fled on into the recesses of the mountains for the remainder of that day —twenty men out of the two thousand who had halted at Iodar. As the evening stole over them, they entered into a narrow defile: the tall hills rose on every side covered with the glory of the setting sun, as if Nature rejoiced to grant her bulwarks as a protection to liberty. A small clear stream ran through the valley, sparkling with the last smile of the departing day; and ever and anon, from the scattered shrubs and the fragrant herbage, came the vesper music of the birds, and the hum of the wild bee.

Parched with thirst, and drooping with fatigue, the wanderers sprang forward with one simultaneous cry of joy to the glassy and refreshing wave which burst so unexpectedly upon them; and it was resolved that they should remain for some hours in a spot where all things invited them to the repose they so imperiously required. They flung themselves at once upon the grass; and such was their exhaustion, that rest was almost synonymous with sleep. Falkland alone could not immediately forget himself in repose: the face of his uncle, ghastly and disfigured, glared upon his eyes whenever he closed them. Just, however, as he was sinking into an unquiet and fitful doze, he heard steps approaching: he started up, and perceived two men, one a peasant, the other in the dress of a hermit. They were the first human beings the wanderers had met; and when Falkland gave the

alarm to Riego, who slept beside him, it was immediately proposed to detain them as guides to the town of Carolina, where Riego had hopes of finding effectual assistance, or the means of ultimate escape. The hermit and his companion refused, with much vehemence, the office imposed upon them; but Riego ordered them to be forcibly detained. He had afterwards reason bitterly to regret this compulsion.

Midnight came on in all the gorgeous beauty of a southern heaven, and beneath its stars they renewed their march.

As Falkland rode by the side of Riego, the latter said to him in a low voice, "There is yet escape for you and my followers; none for me: they have set a price on my head, and the moment I leave these mountains, I enter upon my own destruction." "No, Rafael!" replied Falkland; "you can yet fly to England, that asylum of the free, though ally of the despotic; the abettor of tyranny, but the shelter of its victims!" Riego answered, with the same faint and dejected tone, "I care not now what becomes of me! I have lived solely for freedom: I have made her my mistress, my hope, my dream: I have no existence but in her. With the last effort of my country let me perish also! I have lived to view Liberty not only defeated, but derided: I have seen its efforts not aided, but mocked. In my own country, those only, who wore it, have been respected who used it as a covering to ambition. In other nations, the free stood aloof when the charter of their own rights was violated in the invasion of ours. I cannot forget that the senate of that England, where you promise me a home, rang with insulting plaudits when her statesman breathed his ridicule on our weakness, not his sympathy for our cause; and I—*I*—fanatic—dreamer—enthusiast as I may be called, whose whole life has been one unremitting struggle for the opinion I have adopted, am at least not so blinded by my infatuation but I can see the mockery it incurs. If I die on the scaffold to-morrow, I shall have nothing of martyrdom but its doom; not the triumph—the incense—the immortality of popular applause: I should have no hope to support me at such a moment, gleaned from the glories of the future—nothing but one stern and prophetic conviction of the vanity of that tyranny by which my sentence would be pronounced." Riego

paused for a moment before he resumed, and his pale and death-like countenance received an awful and unnatural light from the intensity of the feeling that swelled and burned within him. His figure was drawn up to its full height, and his voice rang through the lonely hills with a deep and hollow sound, that had in it a tone of prophecy, as he resumed: "It is in vain that they oppose OPINION; any thing else they may subdue. They may conquer wind, water, nature itself; but to the progress of that secret, subtle, pervading spirit, their imagination can devise, their strength can accomplish, no bar: *its votaries* they may seize, they may destroy; *itself* they cannot touch. If they check it in one place, it invades them in another. They cannot build a wall across the whole earth; and, even if they could, it would pass over its summit! Chains cannot bind it, for it is immaterial—dungeons enclose it, for it is universal. Over the faggot and the scaffold—over the bleeding bodies of its defenders which they pile against its path, it sweeps on with a noiseless but unceasing march. Do they levy armies against it, it presents to them no palpable object to oppose. *Its camp is the universe; its asylum is the bosoms of their own soldiers.* Let them depopulate, destroy as they please, to each extremity of the earth; but as long as they have a single supporter themselves—as long as they leave a single individual into whom that spirit can enter—so long they will have the same labours to encounter, and the same enemy to subdue."

As Riego's voice ceased, Falkland gazed upon him with a mingled pity and admiration. Sour and ascetic as was the mind of that hopeless and disappointed man, he felt somewhat of a kindred glow at the pervading and holy enthusiasm of the patriot to whom he had listened; and though it was the character of his own philosophy to question the purity of human motives, and to smile at the more vivid emotions he had ceased to feel, he bowed his soul in homage to those principles whose sanctity he acknowledged, and to that devotion of zeal and fervour with which their defender cherished and enforced them. Falkland had joined the constitutionalists with respect, but not ardour, for their cause. He demanded excitation; he cared little where he found it. He stood in this world a being who mixed in all its changes, performed all its offices, took, as if by the force of superior mechanical power, a leading

share in its events; but whose thoughts and soul were as offsprings of another planet, imprisoned in a human form, and *longing for their home!*

As they rode on, Riego continued to converse with that imprudent unreserve which the openness and warmth of his nature made natural to him: not one word escaped the hermit and the peasant (whose name was Lopez Lara) as they rode on two mules behind Falkland and Riego. "Remember," whispered the hermit to his comrade, "the reward!" "I do," muttered the peasant.

Throughout the whole of that long and dreary night, the wanderers rode on incessantly, and found themselves at day-break near a farm-house; this was Lara's own home. They made the peasant Lara knock; his own brother opened the door. Fearful as they were of the detection to which so numerous a party might conduce, only Riego, another officer, (Don Luis de Sylva,) and Falkland entered the house. The latter, whom nothing ever seemed to render weary or forgetful, fixed his cold stern eye upon the two brothers, and, seeing some signs pass between them, locked the door, and so prevented their escape. For a few hours they reposed in the stables with their horses, their drawn swords by their sides. On waking, Riego found it absolutely necessary that his horse should be shod. Lopez started up and offered to lead it to Arguillas for that purpose. "No," said Riego, who, though naturally imprudent, partook in this instance of Falkland's habitual caution; "your brother shall go and bring hither the farrier." Accordingly the brother went: he soon returned. "The farrier," he said, "was already on the road." Riego and his companions, who were absolutely fainting with hunger, sat down to breakfast; but Falkland, who had finished first, and who had eyed the man since his return with the most scrutinizing attention, withdrew towards the window, looking out from time to time with a telescope which they had carried about them, and urging them impatiently to finish. "Why?" said Riego, "famished men are good for nothing, either to fight or fly—and we *must* wait for the farrier." "True," said Falkland, "but,——" he stopped abruptly. Sylva had his eyes on his face at that moment. Falkland's colour suddenly changed: he turned round with a loud cry. "Up! up! Riego! Sylva! We are undone—the soldiers are upon

us!" "Arm!" cried Riego, starting up. At that moment Lopez and his brother seized their own carbines, and levelled them at the betrayed constitutionalists. "The first who moves," cried the former, "is a dead man!" "Fools!" said Falkland, with a calm bitterness, advancing deliberately towards them. He moved only three steps—Lopez fired. Falkland staggered a few paces, recovered himself, sprang towards Lara, clove him at one blow from the skull to the jaw, and fell, with his victim, lifeless upon the floor. "Enough!" said Riego to the remaining peasant: "We are your prisoners; bind us!" In two minutes more the soldiers entered, and they were conducted to Carolina. Fortunately Falkland was known, when at Paris, to a French officer of high rank then at Carolina. He was removed to the Frenchman's quarters. Medical aid was instantly procured. The first examination of his wound was decisive; recovery was hopeless!

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Night came on again, with her pomp of light and shade —the night that for Falkland had no morrow. One solitary lamp burned in the chamber where he lay alone with God and his own heart. He had desired his couch to be placed by the window, and requested his attendants to withdraw. The gentle and balmy air stole over him, as free and bland as if it were to breathe for him for ever; and the silver moonlight came gleaming trhough the lattice, and played upon his wan brow, like the tenderness of a bride that sought to kiss him to repose. "In a few hours," thought he, as he lay gazing on the high stars which seemed such silent witnesses of an eternal and unfathomed mystery, "in a few hours either this feverish and wayward spirit will be at rest forever, or it will have commenced a new career in an untried and unimaginable existence! In a few hours I may be amongst the very heavens that I survey —a part of their own glory —a new link in a new order of being—breathing amidst the elements of a more gorgeous world—arrayed myself in the attributes of a purer and a diviner nature —a wanderer among the planets—an associate of angels—the beholder of the arcana of the great God—re-

deemed, regenerate, immortal, or——*dust!*

There is no Œdipus to solve the enigma of life. We are—whence came we? We are *not*—whither do we go? All things in our existence have their object; existence has none. We live, move, beget our species, perish, and *for what?* We ask the past its moral; we question the gone years of the reason of our being, and from the clouds of a thousand ages there goes forth no answer. Is it merely to pant beneath this weary load; to sicken of the sun; to grow old; to drop like leaves into the grave: and to bequeath to our heirs the worn garments of toil and labour that we leave behind? Is it to sail for ever on the same sea, ploughing the ocean of time with new furrows, and feeding its billows with new wrecks, or ——" and his thoughts paused, blinded and bewildered.

No man, in whom the mind has not been broken by the decay of the body, has approached death in full consciousness, as Falkland did that moment, and not thought intensely on the change he was about to undergo; and yet what new discoveries upon that subject has any one bequeathed us? There the wildest imaginations are driven from originality into triteness; there all minds, the frivolous and the strong, the busy and the idle, are compelled into the same path and limit of reflection. Upon that unknown and voiceless gulf of inquiry broods an eternal and impenetrable gloom: —no wind breathes over it —no wave agitates its stillness: over the dead and solemn calm there is no change propitious to adventure—there goes forth no vessel of research, which is not driven, baffled, and broken, again upon the shore.

The moon waxed high in her career. Midnight was gathering slowly over the earth: the beautiful, the mystic hour, blent with a thousand memories, hallowed by a thousand dreams, made tender to remembrance by the vows of our youth breathed beneath its star, and solemn by the olden legends which are linked to its majesty and peace—*the hour in which men should die;* the isthmus between two worlds; the climax of the past day; the verge of that which is to come; wrapping us in sleep after a weary travail, and promising us a morrow *which since the first birth of Creation has never failed.* As the minutes glided on, Falkland felt himself grow gradually weaker and weaker. The pain of his wound had ceased, but a deadly sickness gather-

ed over his heart: the room reeled before his eyes, and the damp chill mounted from his feet up—up to the breast in which the life-blood waxed dull and thick. As the hand of the clock pointed *to the half hour after midnight*, the attendants who waited in the adjoining room heard a faint cry. They rushed hastily into Falkland's chamber; they found him stretched half out of the bed. His hand was raised towards the opposite wall; it dropped gradually as they approached him; and his brow, which was at first stern and bent, softened, shade by shade, into its usual serenity. But the dim film gathered fast over his eye, and the last coldness upon his limbs. He strove to raise himself as if to speak: the effort failed, and he fall motionless on his face. They stood by the bed for some moments in silence: at length they raised him gently. Placed against his heart was an open locket of dark hair, which one hand still pressed convulsively. They looked upon his countenance—a single glance was sufficient—it was hushed—proud—passionless—the seal of death was upon it!

THE END.

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